







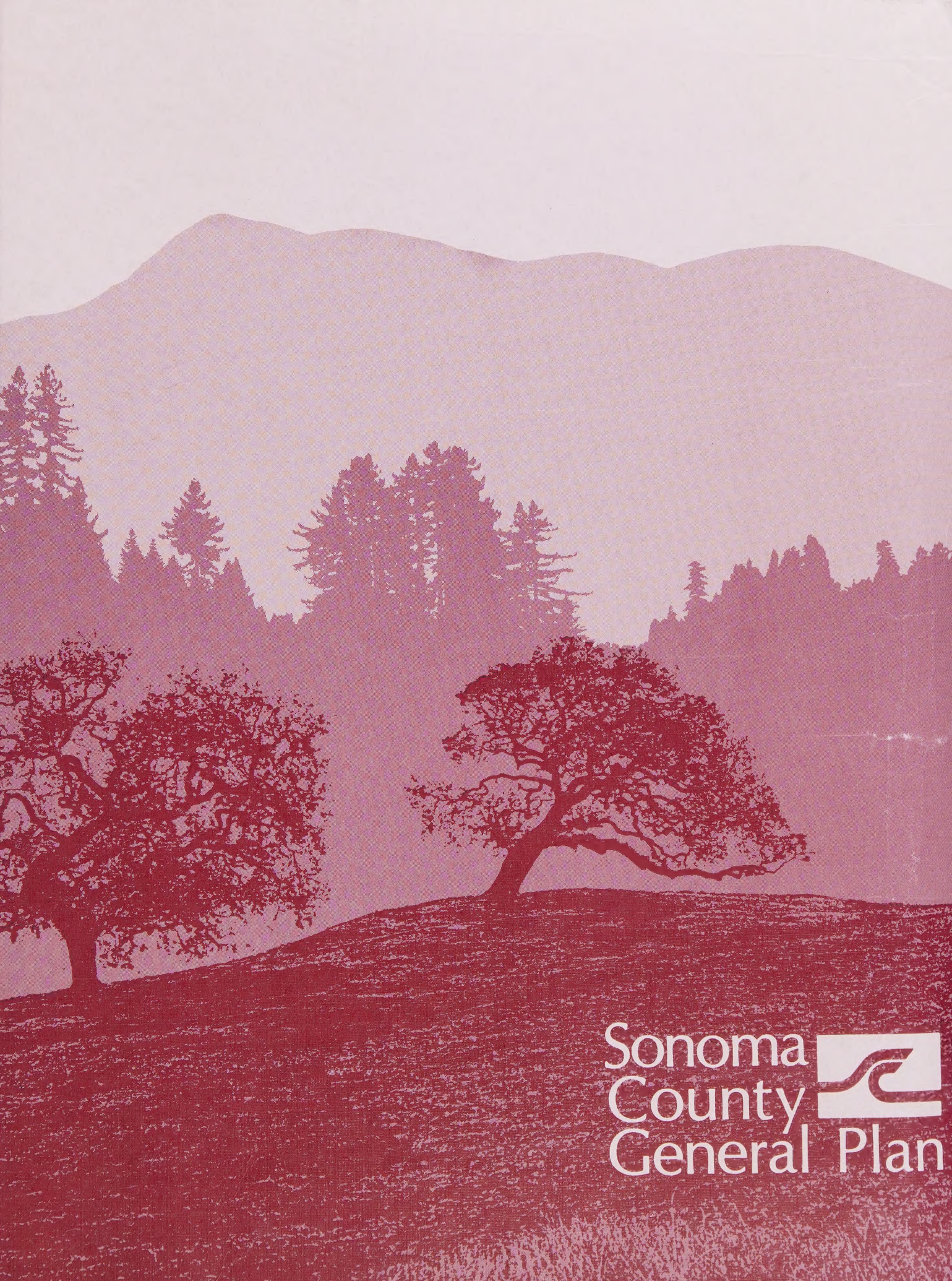


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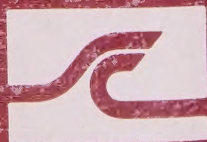
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Sonoma  
County  
General Plan













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INTRODUCTION  
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Sonoma  
County  
General Plan









PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

Sonoma County General Plan  
INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE TO THE PLAN

Prepared for Public Hearings by the  
Sonoma County Planning Commission

December 18, 1986

Sonoma County Planning Department  
575 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, California 95401







**INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE TO THE PLAN**

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## **1.0 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE**

### **1.1 Authority for the General Plan**

Statutory authority for a general plan is expressed in Title 7, Division I of the Government Code of the State of California. Article 5, commencing with Section 65300 of the Government Code, requires the planning agency to prepare and the legislative body -- the Board of Supervisors -- to adopt a comprehensive, long-term, and internally consistent general plan to guide the future physical development of the county. The state law provides for the preparation and adoption of a general plan which responds to local characteristics and conditions and allows any format that is deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body. Although various statutes express requirements that a general plan address a number of different subjects and elements, local governments are authorized to exercise their discretion in establishing the degree of specificity and level of detail that is appropriate to reflect local conditions and circumstances.

Although statutory law shapes the content and procedures for adoption of a general plan, its foundation rests upon the police power, which is reserved to the states by the Federal Constitution and delegated to cities and counties by Article XI, Section 7 of the California Constitution. The police power includes a broad and elastic authority to regulate, including the use and development of land resources, to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

### **1.2 Required and Optional Elements**

Section 65302 of the Government Code mandates that the general plan consist of a statement of development policies, including diagrams or maps and text, setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The general plan is required to include seven elements, although they may be organized in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body, including the combining of elements. The seven mandatory elements are: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Section 65302.1 of the Government Code provides that "the degree of specificity and level of detail of the discussion of each ... element shall reflect local conditions and circumstances." The general plan may also include any additional elements or address additional subjects which, in the judgement of the Board of Supervisors, relate to the physical development of the county.

The Sonoma County General Plan includes the seven mandatory elements, although the required content is distributed among the elements in a slightly different manner than described in state law. In addition, the plan includes three optional elements which address subjects determined to have a substantial bearing on the future physical development of the county and to have special policy importance and sensitivity. The three optional elements -- Agricultural



Resources, Air Transportation, and Public Facilities -- address some subjects which are a mandatory part of the content of general plans; regardless of whether the subject is mandatory, however, the policy directives of the optional elements have the same force and effect as the mandatory elements and must be internally consistent with other elements of the plan.

Each part or element of the Sonoma County General Plan begins with a statement of the specific statutory authority on which it is based, a statement of the element's relationship to the other elements, and the scope of its contents. These introductions identify those instances where required subjects are addressed in a different part of the plan and explain the means by which internal consistency is achieved with other elements.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Plan**

The Sonoma County General Plan is a revision of the previous general plan which was adopted in 1978, and supercedes and replaces that document. This plan carries forward the major goals and policy framework of the 1978 Plan, but changes the format in several ways. A major purpose of the revised plan is to take into consideration the changes in conditions and circumstances that have occurred since 1978, and to express policies in a manner that will simplify their interpretation, administration, and application to individual development decisions. The intent of the plan is that policies, guidelines, and standards be clearly and directly expressed so that property owners and citizens may easily understand its provisions and how they apply to parcels of land as well as their cumulative impact on future environmental conditions and quality of life.

The broad purpose of the Sonoma County General Plan is to express policies which will guide decisions on future growth, development, and conservation of resources through year-2005 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the county's residents. The various elements of the plan and their policies are intended to provide clear, unambiguous guidelines for future decisions of the County of Sonoma and its agencies which are required by state law to conform to the plan and to further its objectives. Under various statutes of the State of California adopted since 1971, many actions -- including approvals pertaining to private development of land, specific plans and their amendments, zonings, subdivisions, open space easements, park and other public facility dedications and in-lieu fees, development agreements, as well as others -- are required to be consistent with the general plan. The plan is also intended to provide clear guidelines for decisions of the County and its agencies when they exercise their corporate powers to acquire or dispose of land for public purposes such as highways and parks, and to construct facilities and provide services such as parks, water, sewerage, roads, and others.



## **2.0 REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **2.1 The Regional Setting**

Sonoma County, the most northerly of the nine counties comprising the San Francisco Bay Region, is located along the Pacific coastline about forty miles north of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. The county encompasses an area of just over 1500 square miles, making it the largest of the nine Bay Area counties. Its population of about 339,000 as of 1986 ranked sixth among the nine counties, and constituted about six percent of the Bay Area's total population. The county's location in the regional setting is shown in Figure IG-1.

The county is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west; Marin County and San Pablo Bay to the south; Solano, Napa and Lake Counties to the east; and Mendocino County on the north. Because of the geographic configuration of the Northbay area and topographic features, transportation linkages to adjacent counties are limited to a few routes. The U.S. Highway 101 Freeway is the major north-south route, and connects the county to San Francisco and Marin to the south and to Mendocino on the north.

### **2.2 The County Setting**

Sonoma County's 1500 square miles comprise a diverse mosaic of landforms, environments, and human settlements. The broad, flat Santa Rosa Plain, which lies between the Sonoma Mountains on the east and low coastal hills on the west, contains the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, and Cotati and the unincorporated communities of Roseland, Larkfield and Windsor. The sparsely-settled western margin of the county, along the Pacific coastline, includes the redwood and mixed conifer forests of the Mendocino Highlands in the north and rolling oak-studded hills, dairylands, and coastal prairies in the south as far inland as the city of Petaluma. The Mayacmas Range forms the eastern boundary of the county, and along with the Sonoma Mountain range encloses the Sonoma Valley or "Valley of the Moon," a scenic agricultural valley which extends from near Santa Rosa southeastward to the city of Sonoma and the marshlands of San Pablo Bay. In the north, the Mayacmas Range and Mendocino Highlands enclose the Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys, which along with the Sonoma Valley are especially noted for their production of premium winegrapes. In the far northeast, the remote interior of the Mayacmas Range contains The Geysers, the world's largest developed geothermal steam field.

Although the entire county enjoys a Mediterranean climate with long, dry summers and mild, wet winters, substantial climatic variations occur within close proximity. These micro-climates range from the cool, wet coastal area, which is frequently covered by a layer of marine fog in summer, to the warm, sunny, and relatively dry interior valleys. Rainfall varies from about 20 inches annually in the southeast to over 80 inches at locations such as Cazadero along the northern coast.



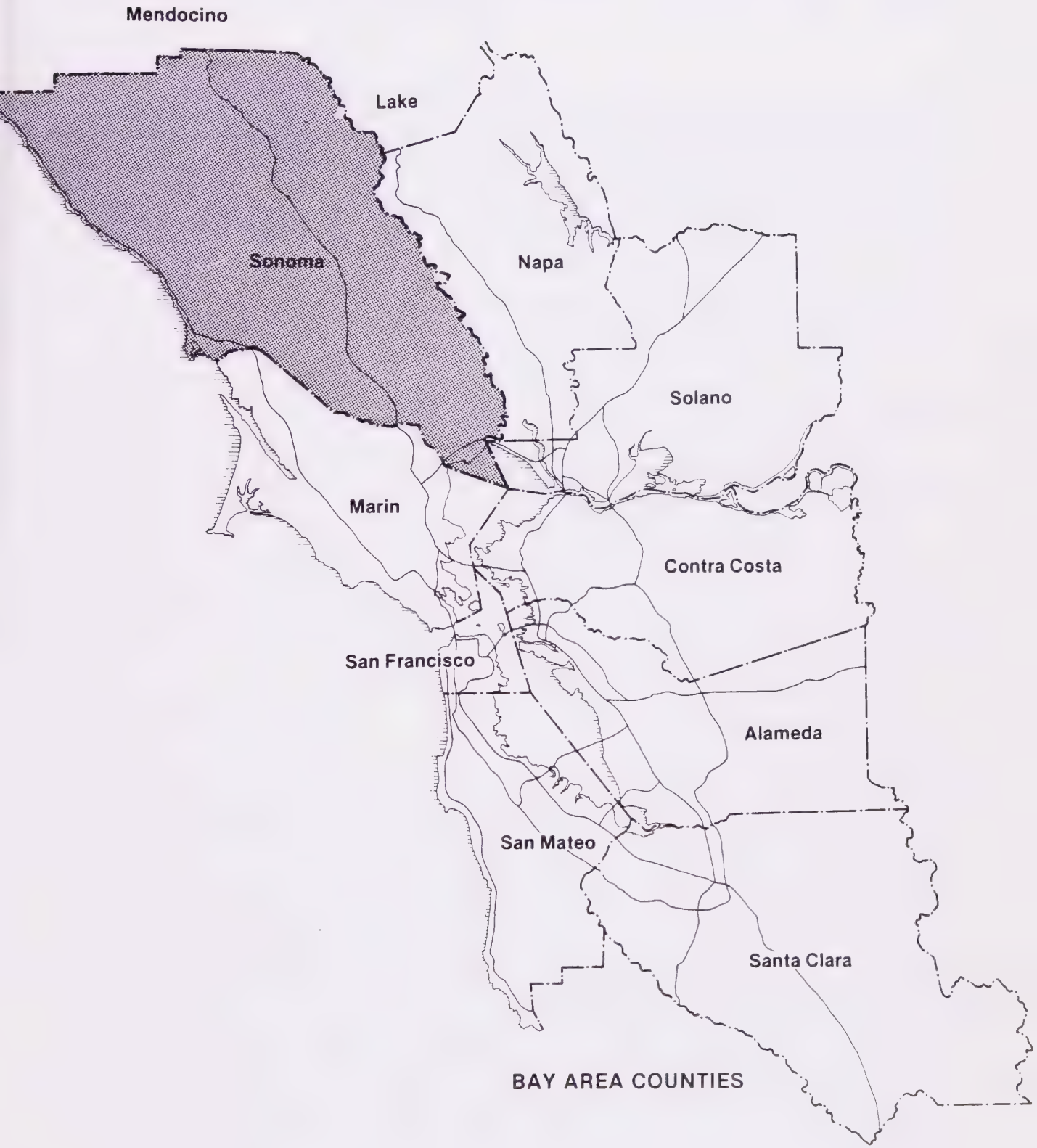
The County's eight cities -- Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Healdsburg, Sonoma, Sebastopol, Cotati, and Cloverdale -- contained a combined population of just under 200,000 in 1986, about 58 percent of the total population of 339,000. Santa Rosa, the largest city, had nearly 100,000 residents. The 140,000 residents in unincorporated areas were concentrated in urban areas located just outside several cities, notably Santa Rosa and Sonoma, and in a series of small- or medium-sized rural communities. These communities varied substantially in their character, and their diversity and quaintness contribute to the quality of life that is desired by many residents.

### **2.3 Intergovernmental Planning Coordination**

The Sonoma County General Plan has been prepared in a manner which makes it compatible with the plans of the eight cities, and with plans or policies established by other governmental agencies or entities ranging from in scale from small special districts to multi-county regional agencies. Areas for future expansion of the cities, identified by an "urban service boundary," are established by the plan, and were coordinated with the various cities. Along with the County of Sonoma, the eight cities are general purpose governments; through their general plans and development ordinances, they manage the growth and development of lands within their corporate boundaries. Although the County's plan does not regulate development within the cities, it is applicable to lands outside their boundaries but within the "sphere of influence" adopted by the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The County's plan applies to these lands, however, only until they are annexed by the city and in general limits their development while under County jurisdiction so as to encourage orderly urban development and provision of services following annexation. In some instances, the policies of the plan establish larger "areas of interest" for cities, in order to provide for their review and comment on proposed county actions and to coordinate projects in the vicinities of the cities.

Many aspects of the plan are countywide in their application or effects. The Circulation and Transit Element, for example, includes projections of future traffic conditions and a highway network plan that take into consideration the future growth and development of the cities as well as the unincorporated area. The plan addresses many services, such as water and regional parks, that are provided by county agencies to residents of cities and unincorporated areas alike.

The plan has also been formulated to be compatible, to the maximum extent practicable, with the policies and concerns of adjacent counties and regional agencies. In its understanding of transportation problems and issues in the Highway 101 corridor, for example, the plan has been guided by the work of the Highway 101 Action Committee, which is comprised of officials from Marin, San Francisco, and Sonoma Counties as well as state and regional transportation agencies. Various regional plans and policies were considered in formulating



**LOCATION OF  
SONOMA COUNTY WITHIN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**



the general plan, including those of the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Bay Area Water Quality Control Board, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and others. The text of the various elements notes those situations where these agencies have particular responsibilities that affect the physical development of the county and approvals of permits.

### **3.0 ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN**

#### **3.1 The Plan's Format**

The general plan consists of the 10 elements and the Introduction and Guide to the Plan. These are:

- Part 1: Introduction and Guide to the Plan
- Part 2: Land-use Element
- Part 3: Housing Element
- Part 4: Open Space Element
- Part 5: Agricultural Resources Element
- Part 6: Resource Conservation Element
- Part 7: Public Safety Element
- Part 8: Circulation and Transit Element
- Part 9: Air Transportation Element
- Part 10: Public Facilities and Services Element
- Part 11: Noise Element
- Part 12: Appendices

A detailed outline of the contents of the plan is provided in Exhibit 1 at the end of this Introduction. The elements are in a loose-leaf format, so that future amendments and revisions may be easily incorporated within the document. Each of the 10 elements expresses policies which are related to the physical development of the county to year-2005 and includes a short-range implementation program. The various elements include both sections that are informational and sections that express policies. Informational sections frequently have headings such as "introduction," "background," or "issues." In some parts of the plan, sections titled "directive" provide a transition from the informational content to the sections of the plan which are regulatory in effect. A "directive" serves to indicate that, following consideration of alternative viewpoints or courses of action, a particular approach was selected to guide the manner in which policy is formulated. The regulatory sections of the plan consist of numbered goals, objectives, and policies. As used in the plan, these terms have the following definitions:

**Goal:** A general statement of a desired future condition or end to which effort will be directed throughout the 20-year time horizon of the plan. A goal provides a clear sense of direction for future actions and decisions.

**Objective:** A specific, detailed statement of a desired future condition or target towards which progress is measurable. Objectives are intended to be achieved during a short to intermediate timeframe.

**Policy:** A statement of an action or group of actions that will be taken, or a measure that will be employed, to achieve an objective. Policies imply commitments of time and personnel, financial, and/or administrative resources.

While goals, objectives and policies are in force and effect upon adoption of the plan, additional implementation measures -- referred to as programs -- require subsequent decisions and actions by the Board of Supervisors or other agencies in order to be carried out. Programs are a specific, organized series of actions, measures or procedures that implement a policy.

In addition to the text, the various elements of the plan usually include one or more maps, including a map for each of the nine sub-county planning regions shown in Figure IG-2. The classifications shown on the maps have been closely coordinated with the policies expressed in the text; the maps serve to identify the land areas to which various policies apply.

### 3.2 The Policy Framework

Nine general goals, along with their related objectives and policies, form the central framework for all elements of the plan. These are fully expressed in Section 2.0 of the Land-use Element; for informational purposes, these nine basic policies may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The provisions of the various elements of the plan are closely correlated with projected population and economic growth in the nine sub-county regions. For example, the land-use plan provides a sufficient, but not excessive, supply of land for future residential, commercial, industrial and other types of development to year 2005. The highway and transit plans are formulated to provide a transportation system that will accommodate the needs of the projected population. Growth to a population of 464,500 residents and employment of about 190,000 jobs is projected by year 2005.
- 2) The plan's policies direct the major share of future growth and development to the eight cities and several unincorporated communities which have, or are planned to have, adequate public services such as water and sewerage systems. Conversely, the amount of growth in rural areas is limited.



- 3) The various elements express policies which encourage compact city and community boundaries. The intent is that growth occur in an orderly manner through "infill" of development on existing vacant parcels and lands immediately contiguous to existing development, rather than in a scattered or "leapfrog" fashion.
- 4) The plan directs that future growth and approvals of development projects be phased or sequenced with availability of adequate public services, such as roads, water, sewer, fire protection and the like.
- 5) Maintenance of "community separator" open space areas between cities and/or communities is established as a major principle of the plan. These areas are intended to remain rural in character, with little development of structural improvements.
- 6) The plan provides opportunities for the development of diverse rural and urban residential environments, although additional rural residential development is limited to "infill" in areas already having this type of use.
- 7) The types and intensities of future uses and development which are permissible are correlated with the environmental characteristics of the various land areas in a manner that reduces future exposure of people and property to natural hazards and protects environmentally sensitive lands.
- 8) Protection of agricultural lands and promotion of the county's agricultural economy are established as a high priority.
- 9) Unique or important natural features which contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and to the county's tourism economy, such as coastal areas, marshland, and hillsides, are conserved and protected from development of uses which would diminish their quality.

Evaluations of any future proposals to revise or amend the plan's maps or specific policies would assess the extent to which the proposed change contributes to or detracts from achievement of the nine general goals and policies.

### 3.3 The Plan Elements

The various subjects addressed by the plan are organized into 10 elements:

**Land-use:** In addition to the nine general goals and policies, the land-use element describes where the different kinds of uses for land may be established in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County. Lands are classified on nine regional maps into land-use categories, each of which allows various types of uses and building intensities. Sections of this element express policies which are specific to the nine regions.

**PLANNING AREA KEY**

1. Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
2. Cloverdale/N.E. County
3. Healdsburg and Environs
4. Russian River Area
5. Santa Rosa and Environs
6. Sebastopol and Environs
7. Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
8. Petaluma and Environs
9. Sonoma Valley

**SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
575 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution:
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution:

1. Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
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**Housing:** Future housing production needed to accommodate projected growth is evaluated, along with policies to: 1) encourage development of housing for low- and moderate-income households, 2) meet the special shelter needs of specific population groups, 3) maintain and improve the quality of housing, and 4) encourage production of diverse types of housing. A specific five-year program is identified.

**Open Space:** This element designates various portions of the county in several open space classifications. The limitations on types and intensities of permissible uses and special development and permit review requirements are expressed in the text for each open space classification.

**Agricultural Resources:** Detailed guidelines and policies which apply to lands designated in the three agricultural use categories are stated in this element. Policies address marketing of agricultural products, stabilization of agricultural use at the edge of urban areas, limitations on intrusions of residential uses, the location of agricultural services and tourism uses, farmworker housing and the streamlining of permit procedures for agricultural uses.

**Resource Conservation:** Policies are expressed for managed production and conservation of various resources, including: soils, water, forests and timber, vegetation and wildlife, fisheries and harbors, geothermal, mineral, energy, and atmospheric resources.

**Public Safety:** Special limitations and procedures for review of development projects located in areas subject to natural hazards are included in these policies. Safety hazards addressed include seismic and other geologic hazards, flooding, and susceptibility to wildland fires.

**Circulation and Transit:** The plans for the county's future highway and transit systems are expressed, with particular emphasis on the Highway 101 corridor and a parallel arterial system. The plan emphasizes an increased role for transit in serving commute trips and the importance of measures which will allocate existing highway capacity more efficiently during peak travel periods.

**Air Transportation:** This element expresses policies related to the several public use airports in the county, including compatibility of land uses in adjacent areas. The plan focuses on the Sonoma County Airport and expresses policies related to the types and amounts of aviation activities to be accommodated and facilities needed to serve them. Protection of approach zones is established as a priority.



**Public Facilities:** The various public services which may affect the future development of land are emphasized, including water, sewerage, parks, education, fire protection, and others. The element expresses policies related to the levels at which services are to be provided, establishment of boundaries for service areas and criteria for annexations, and service requirements to be incorporated into the review of permits for private development projects.

**Noise:** This element evaluates existing and projected future noise conditions related to highways, airports, and other sources and expresses policies and standards to assure noise-compatibility in future land development.

#### **4.0 PLAN ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **4.1 Administration of the Plan: A User's Guide**

The plan is intended to provide clear, easily understandable guidelines and policies that will be a framework for day-to-day decisions of the County of Sonoma pertaining to land use and development. In the event that questions of interpretation arise, however, the Planning Department will prepare written administrative interpretations which will assure consistent application of the plan; these administrative determinations may be reviewed by the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors at the request of any interested person. While the policies expressed herein have force and effect immediately upon their adoption by the Board of Supervisors, the objectives of the plan are accomplished primarily through the application of the policies to individual future decisions. Various laws of the State of California require consistency of certain county actions with the general plan, and others require findings or a report on whether proposed local actions conform to the general plan. This summary is intended to comprise a general guide to explain how to determine which provisions of the plan apply to various types of actions; since it is not exhaustive, the reader is cautioned to refer to the statements of policies in each of the elements.

##### **4.1.1 Applicability to Decisions on Development Permits**

Certain actions on applications for permits for private development projects are required by State law and/or County ordinance to conform to the general plan and/or to include findings in the record as to whether the project is consistent. These quasi-judicial development permits include subdivisions, use permits, development agreements, design review and others. The applicability of the plan may be determined in the following manner:

###### **1) Is the proposed use permissible?**

- Examine the land-use plan map to determine the use category applicable to the parcel.

- Read the text which expresses the policies for the applicable use category.
- Review the policies expressed in the text of the Land-use Element pertaining to the region in which the parcel is located; these policies may limit the scale or types of uses which are allowable in particular locations.

**2) What requirements pertain to the manner in which the project may be developed?**

- Examine the Open Space Plan map, Safety Element map, and other plan maps to determine if any special designations or classifications apply to the parcel.
- If an open space, public safety or other map designation applies to the parcel or a portion thereof, read the section of the text of the element that expresses the requirements related to the map designation. These may regulate the location of development on a site, require dedication of land or easements for public purposes, or otherwise establish development criteria and standards.

**3) What findings need to be made by the decision-making body that considers the proposed project?**

- For each map designation that applies to the subject parcel, the types of necessary findings are expressed in the applicable element of the plan.
- The appropriateness of findings for a particular project depend upon judgements of the decision-making body after considering the facts related to the project and the criteria and policies expressed in the plan.

Additional requirements applicable to proposed projects may be expressed in various ordinances of the County of Sonoma or in specific plans for certain areas of the County.

#### **4.1.2 Applicability to Zoning Map and Specific Plan Amendments**

Government Code Section 65860 requires that county zoning ordinances be consistent with the general plan; the various land uses authorized by the zoning district applicable to a parcel of land, or portion thereof, must be compatible with the objectives, policies and land-use category designated in the general plan. Following adoption of the general plan, or any future amendment thereto, any zoning that would become inconsistent with the general plan must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is consistent with the general plan as adopted or amended. Section 65454 of the Government Code directs that "no specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan." Findings of consistency for these actions, which are legislative decisions, are made in a manner similar to that described in the preceeding section.



#### **4.1.3 Applicability to Development Management Ordinances**

Zoning is generally considered one of the primary tools for implementing the general plan. The general plan and the zoning ordinance are parallel documents in that they both contain maps and text specifying development standards and permissible locations for various types of uses. The development standards and uses expressed in all zoning districts must be consistent with and conform to the uses and standards of the general plan's text and maps. Although the County has broad discretion in zoning, state statutes require two specific types of zoning: an open space zoning ordinance consistent with the open space element and a Timberland Preserve Zoning (TPZ) ordinance to zone qualifying timberlands. The Sonoma County General Plan includes specific programs which identify appropriate changes to the zoning ordinance and a general schedule for preparing the revisions for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. Similar changes to the subdivision ordinance are identified pursuant to Government Code Section 66418, which authorizes that ordinance to include appropriate requirements or measures "to insure conformity to or implementation of the general plan."

#### **4.1.4 Applicability to County Public Works Projects**

Various public works projects undertaken by the County of Sonoma or its agencies, such as roadway construction or acquisition of land for parks, are required to conform to the general plan. The various plan elements express criteria which are to be used by County departments, agencies, and the Board of Supervisors in reaching findings as to consistency of proposed projects.

#### **4.1.5 Applicability to Projects of Other Governmental Entities**

Other local governments within Sonoma County, such as cities, sewer and water districts, school districts, and others, are required to submit proposed projects to acquire or dispose of real property or to construct public buildings or facilities in unincorporated portions of the County to the county planning agency for a report as to conformity with the plan. Findings of inconsistency, however, may be overruled by the local agency pursuant to Sections 65402(b) and 65402(c) of the Government Code.

#### **4.2 Implementation Measures**

The plan includes specific measures for implementing its goals and objectives. The policies of the plan directly accomplish many of the purposes of the plan. In other instances, specific measures which require future decisions by the Board of Supervisors are identified, along with a general timetable for their effectuation. The various implementation measures pertain to specific plans, zoning and subdivision regulations, parkland dedication requirements, housing and building regulations, design review, requirements for public facility fees, redevelopment, construction of roads and various public facilities, creation of Williamson Act contracts, acquisition of development rights and open space easements, and various others.

## **5.0 FUTURE REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE PLAN**

### **5.1 Annual Review of the Plan and its Implementation**

The general plan is intended as a dynamic document which will be revised periodically to reflect the values of the county's residents and to appropriately respond to existing and projected future conditions -- all of which continually change. The plan calls for establishment of an on-going, countywide general plan advisory committee, which would assist in an annual review of the adequacy and appropriateness of the plan and the effectiveness of its implementation. One purpose of the annual review is to identify any changes that may be necessary or appropriate to reflect current conditions and values. An annual report on the plan's status will be prepared each year and submitted to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

### **5.2 Plan Amendment Procedures**

Any interested citizen may submit a request to have a proposed amendment of the plan considered. State law restricts the number of amendments to four each calendar year, although each amendment may encompass a series of individual changes to the plan. Plan amendments will be considered by the Planning Commission according to a pre-established schedule of four meeting dates spaced throughout the calendar year. Individuals, however, may submit amendment requests at any time on forms that are available at the Planning Department. Within six weeks following submittal of a request, the department will schedule the proposal for review by the Planning Commission, which is responsible for defining the specific scope and content of the proposal in a manner which would assure internal consistency among the elements of the plan and avoid "spot" designations on the various plan maps. Following definition of the proposal for plan amendment by the Commission, environmental review will be undertaken by the Planning Department. All accumulated requests for amendments will be scheduled for public hearing at the next Planning Commission date for general plan amendments, following completion of necessary reports and environmental documentation. General Plan amendments are legislative actions and the final decision is made by the Board of Supervisors following a public hearing. The Board has broad discretion to approve or deny proposed amendments, subject only to the qualification that amendments be deemed to be in the public interest. The Board of Supervisors, by resolution of a majority of its members, may initiate consideration of a proposed amendment at any time it deems suitable or appropriate.

Amendments which have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors shall be published as follows: 1) changes to the policies and other text of the plan shall be published on pages which may be inserted in the appropriate locations as replacement pages or additional pages in the applicable element. The effective date of the last adopted amendment shall be referenced on the pages with changes or additions. 2) Amendments to the land-use plan and open space



plan maps shall be published on pages which may be inserted in the document; periodic revisions of the original document maps shall incorporate all of these changes which have accumulated since the previous revision. The date of amendment and identifying number of the resolution approving the amendment shall be noted on the map for each area amended. 3) Amendments to other policy and informational maps in the plan shall be published in the same manner as amendments to the land-use and open space maps.

### **5.3 Periodic Updates of the Plan**

A comprehensive review and revision of the plan will be undertaken at least every five years, following the first such review in 1990.

## **6.0 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PLAN PREPARATION AND FUTURE UPDATES**

The County of Sonoma encourages a high degree of public awareness of planning and development issues and participation by interested citizens in the preparation, periodic revision, and amendment of the plan. Preparation of this plan was assisted by two advisory committees appointed by the Board of Supervisors: an overall General Plan Advisory Committee responsible for reviewing and making suggestions on all elements of the plan, and an Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee with responsibility focused on several elements, especially the Agricultural Resources Element, which affected the county's agricultural industry. Each of these committees held numerous public meetings over a period of two years, from May 1985 through the conclusion of public hearings on the draft plan. In addition to these meetings, numerous local community workshop meetings were conducted by planning staff in various areas of the county, including Geyserville, Bodega Bay, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Sonoma, and Santa Rosa. Local residents and property owners were encouraged to attend these meetings and express their views about planning issues and policies which were proposed for incorporation into the general plan. Members of the advisory committees are identified in Exhibit 2 to this Introduction and Guide.

The plan calls for establishment of an on-going general plan advisory committee composed of elected officials and citizens alike. This committee will meet periodically to review progress in implementing the plan and any revisions which are appropriate to consider. Any future comprehensive revision of the plan will include opportunities for citizen involvement and participation.

**EXHIBIT 1**

**CONTENTS OF THE PLAN**

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE TO THE PLAN**

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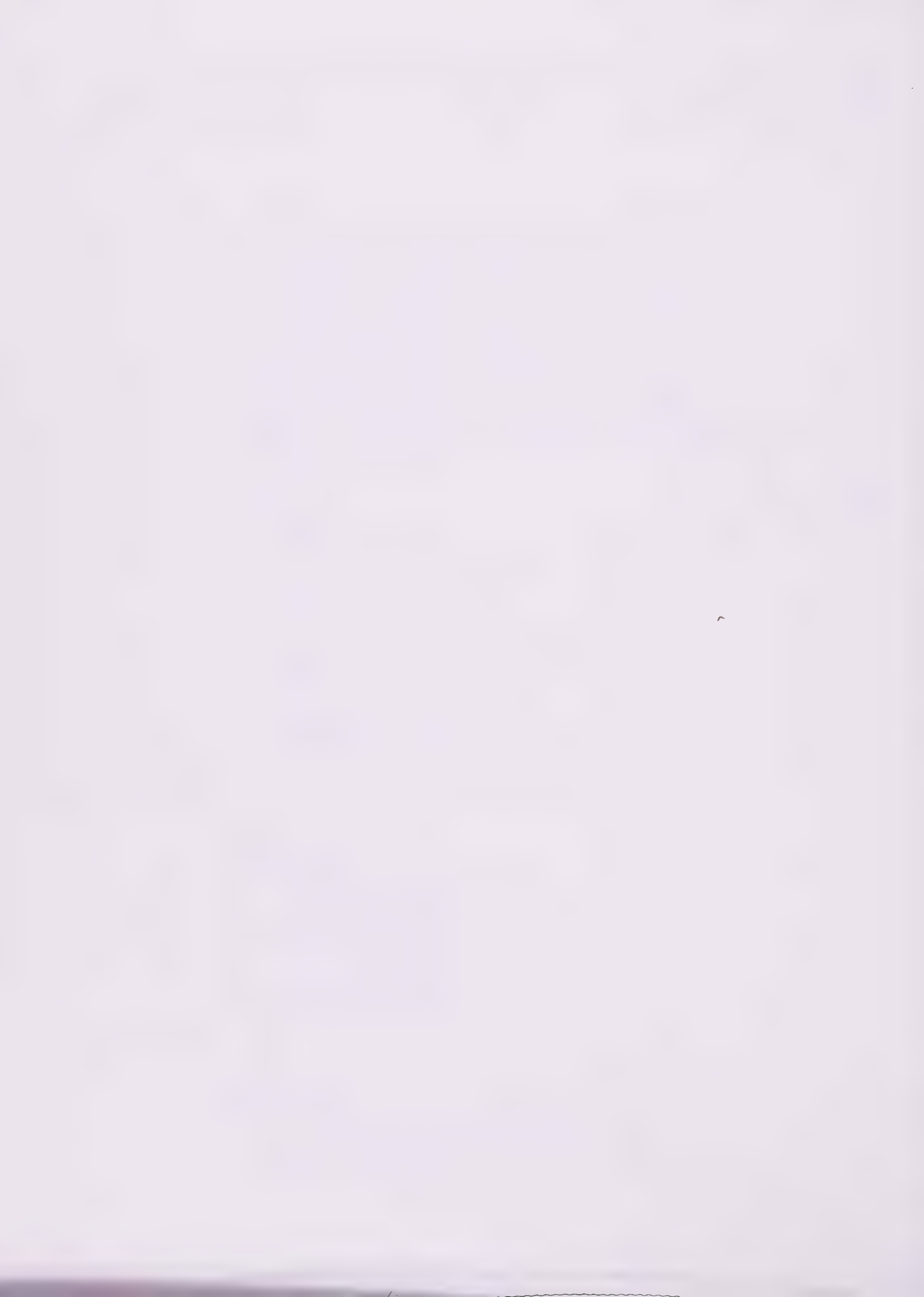
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# LAND USE ELEMENT PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT





PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

Sonoma County General Plan  
L A N D - U S E    E L E M E N T

Prepared for Public Hearings by the  
Sonoma County Planning Commission

December 4, 1986

Sonoma County Planning Department  
575 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, California 95401





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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE**

Authority for the land-use element of a general plan is expressed in Title 7, Division I (Section 65302) of the Government Code of the State of California. State law mandates that the general plan consist of a statement of development policies which include diagrams or maps and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The land-use element is required to designate the distribution, location, and extent of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The law further requires that the land-use element include standards for population density and building intensity for each use category applied within the territory encompassed by the plan.

The broad purpose of the Land-use Element of the Sonoma County General Plan is to establish policies to guide future growth and development and use of land resources through the year 2005 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the county's residents. The land-use plan and its policies are intended to provide a clear and unambiguous guide to land-use decisions. As with other elements of the general plan, the Land-use Element's provisions are directory rather than advisory for day-to-day land-use decisions and actions of the County of Sonoma. Under various statutes of the State of California adopted since 1971, many actions -- including approvals of specific plans, zonings, subdivisions, open space easements, park dedications, capital improvements, development agreements, redevelopment plans, agricultural preserves, as well as others -- are required to be consistent with and conform to an adopted general plan. One major function of the Land-use Element is to establish clear direction and standards for judging the consistency of these actions as required by state law.

Additionally, it is the purpose of the Land-use Element to express an implementation program to be undertaken by the County of Sonoma and its various agencies to effectuate and carry out land-use policies and to attain conformity of land-use regulations with the plan. The implementation program comprises an explicit set of measures which are intended to be accomplished within the short- or intermediate-term, rather than a list of possible measures.

### **1.2 RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER ELEMENTS**

Section 65300.5 of the Government Code of the State of California requires that the various elements of a general plan comprise an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency. This requirement means, in effect, that each of the elements of a general plan are equal in legal status and that the provisions of any one element may not be subordinate to those of another element.



The Land-use Element of the Sonoma County General Plan complies with this requirement and achieves technical and policy consistency in the following manner:

1. The Land-use Element utilizes the same economic-demographic projections and assumptions as the other elements, notably the Housing, Circulation and Transit, Public Facilities and Services, and Air Transportation Elements.
2. Policies in the Land-use Element are designed to complement and reinforce policies expressed in the other elements of the general plan.
3. The land-use plan maps reflect a consciously selected balance among the various goals and objectives expressed in the several elements of the general plan.
4. For specific land areas where policies expressed in several elements apply, the land-uses and their intensities or densities authorized by the Land-use Element are designated so as to achieve the appropriate balance in a manner compatible with the other elements. A policy expressed in another element shall not be utilized as a basis for challenging the validity of uses or densities authorized by the Land-use Element.
5. The policies in several elements -- particularly the Open Space, Agricultural Resources, Resource Conservation, Safety, and Public Facilities Elements -- are cross-referenced to the Land-use Element. This is accomplished by explicit statements in those elements that a policy applies to land areas which are designated in particular land-use categories by the Land-use Element.

Additionally, some requirements expressed in state law for the content of land-use elements may be found in other elements of the Sonoma County General Plan. For example, Government Code Section 65302(a) states that the land-use element shall identify land areas which are subject to flooding. This requirement is accomplished in the Safety Element of the Sonoma County General Plan; however, the applicable sections of the Safety Element shall be considered a part of the Land-use Element and any amendments thereto shall be deemed to be amendments of both elements.

### **1.3 SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION**

The Land-use Element has four major sections: a comprehensive statement of the countywide land-use policy framework, statements of policies specific to each of nine sub-county planning areas or regions, a land-use plan map for each of these nine areas, and a land-use implementation program.

Countywide Land-use Policy Framework

The countywide land-use policy framework includes: a) statements of general policy and b) policy which is particular to lands which are within each of a series of 16 land-use categories. The general framework expresses those policy concepts that apply throughout the county and which provide a uniform set of principles for: 1) establishing priorities for use of land resources, 2) establishing criteria for determination of the most appropriate land-use category to be applied to particular land areas, and 3) defining a set of more-specific and detailed land-use policies which are appropriate for lands within each of the nine planning regions. Proposals to amend other more specific or detailed land-use policies or the land-use plan maps shall be approved only if findings are made that the proposed changes are consistent with and/or further the attainment of each of the general policies or if the general policy itself is changed so as to be compatible. Each general policy contains a description of the issue to which it is addressed including a summary of background information or analyses which may be appropriate, a statement of the goals and objectives to which policies will be directed, and identification of those policies which shall guide county decisions and actions in a manner that will accomplish land-use objectives. The Land-use Element, as well as other elements of the Sonoma County General Plan, uses the following terminology:

Goal: A general statement of a desired future condition or end to which effort will be directed throughout the 20-year time horizon of the plan. A goal provides a clear sense of direction for future actions and decisions.

Objective: A specific, detailed statement of a desired future condition or target towards which progress is measurable. Objectives are intended to be achieved during a short to intermediate timeframe.

Policy: A statement of an action or group of actions that will be taken, or a measure that will be employed, to achieve an objective. Policies imply commitments of time and personnel, financial, and/or administrative resources.

Program: A specific, organized series of actions, measures, or procedures that implement a policy. Program statements provide detailed information on the manner in which a policy will be carried out. Adoption and implementation of a program will usually entail a separate decision or action in the future, rather than being accomplished directly by adoption of this plan.

The second component of the countywide land-use framework consists of policy statements for each of 16 land-use classifications or categories. These policies are applicable to land areas so designated on the land-use plan maps



and include statements of purpose and objectives, permitted uses, permitted residential densities and standards for intensity of use, criteria for characteristics of lands to establish their eligibility to be designated within the category, and other policies as appropriate. Standards for permitted residential densities are expressed in terms of dwellings per acre for urban residential categories and acres per dwelling for those rural categories which permit residential use. The standard for population density within each category shall be computed individually for each of the nine sub-county planning regions as the product of the number of dwellings permitted per unit of land area and the projected average household size for the planning region.

### **Land-use Policy for the Nine Sub-county Regions**

The second part of the Land-use Element consists of policies which are specific to the individual sub-county planning areas shown in Figure LU-1. Each planning area is briefly described and the major land-use issues are summarized. These sections of the land-use element express objectives and policies as they apply uniquely to particular lands within each planning area rather than countywide.

### **Land-use Plan Maps for each of the Nine Planning Areas**

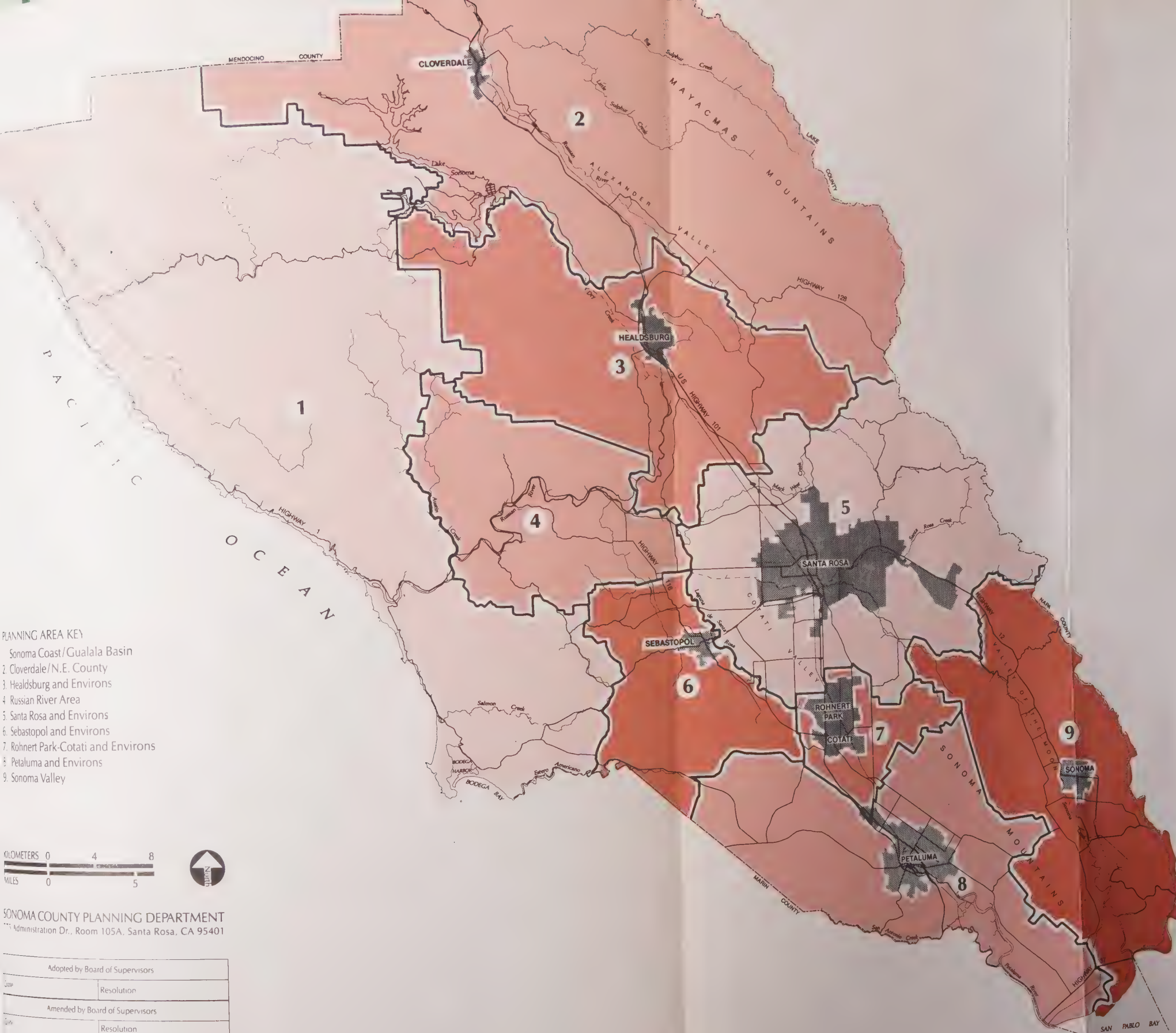
The land-use element also includes land-use plan maps for the nine planning areas shown in Figure LU-1. These maps vary in scale from one inch to 1,500 feet in the Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs area to one inch to 5,000 feet in the Sonoma Coast - Gualala Basin area. The land-use plan maps show parcel boundaries so that they are clear as to which land-use category applies to any particular land area. The maps also include enlargements of selected community areas where parcel sizes are small and land-use categories are more differentiated at a small scale.

A complete and accurate understanding of the land-use plan maps requires that they be used in conjunction with the text of the land-use element, in particular the policies defining each use category and the policies expressed in the text for each planning area. This is especially the case in those situations where more than one use category applies to a parcel (or portions thereof) or where an "overlay" designation is used to modify the provisions of a "base" category. In some instances, unincorporated "islands" within or adjacent to cities are not shown on the land-use plan maps, but are hereby designated as "rural residential" with a maximum permitted density of one dwelling per five acres. In the event that any other land areas are not shown or do not have a use category assigned, said land areas shall be "rural residential" with a maximum density of one dwelling per ten acres. Any future changes to the land-use plan maps, whether to change the use category, the permitted residential density, or any applicable overlay shall be accomplished through the general plan amendment process rather than by administrative or technical adjustment.



# NINE SUB-COUNTY PLANNING REGIONS

LAND-USE ELEMENT



Sonoma County General Plan



### **Land-use Implementation Program**

The final part of the land-use element expresses the short- and intermediate term implementation program of the County of Sonoma which is designed to accomplish the land-use objectives and to bring the County's land-use regulations into conformity with the plan. Each program is summarized in terms of its objectives or proposes, the agency responsible for preparing and administering the program, the recommended timeframe for adoption, and the major features called for in the program. The establishment or implementation of some programs would require additional decisions by the Board of Supervisors or other appropriate agencies separate from adoption of this plan.





## **2.0 COUNTYWIDE LAND-USE POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The countywide land-use policy framework consists of: (a) nine general goals for use of Sonoma County's land resources, with related objectives and policies; and (b) policies which define 16 distinct and separate land-use categories within which land areas are designated on the land-use plan maps.

### **2.1 GENERAL GOALS AND POLICIES FOR USE OF LAND RESOURCES**

The goals and policies expressed in this section comprise the fundamental framework for the more detailed and specific policies and programs presented in the text for the nine planning areas. The general goals and policies also provide the basis for the policies defining the 16 land-use categories and for determining the land areas to which they are applied. The provisions of those portions of the Land-use Element, and any future amendments thereto, shall conform to the intent of the goals, policies, and other directives of this section.

The nine general goals include:

- growth projections and growth policy
- city- and community-centered growth
- compact city and community boundaries
- phasing of rural and urban growth with availability of adequate services
- open space separation between cities/communities
- opportunities for diverse rural and urban residential environments
- utilization of environmental suitability criteria to locate urban and rural growth
- preservation of agricultural lands
- preservation of unique or important natural areas,

This section is organized by subsections devoted to each of these key general policies. Each subsection begins with a brief discussion of the issues involved, setting forth a summary of the relevant problems and how they might be resolved. The remaining portions of each subsection express directives, which are conclusions about the approach to be taken by the plan, and the plan's goals, objectives, and policies.

#### **2.1.1 Growth Projections and Growth Policy**

**Issues:** Opinions differ as to whether the Sonoma County General Plan should attempt to accommodate the amount of growth that is projected to occur during the period 1985 to 2005 based upon market forces, as reflected in past trends, or if the plan should attempt to restrict the amount of growth to some lesser amount. Concerns also extend to the rate and timing of future growth and the geographic distribution of new population and employment activities among the

nine sub-county planning regions. The varying viewpoints are associated with conclusions about the amount of growth that can be absorbed without: a) exceeding the carrying capacity of the natural environment; b) resulting in substantial deterioration in the quality of life for existing residents; and/or c) over taxing public service systems such as sewer and water facilities and roadways.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), in its 1985 projection series, forecasted that the county's population would reach approximately 475,000 by year 2005, an increase of 59 percent from 1980. Projections by the Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance (DOF) indicate a similar population size and growth rate. ABAG forecasted that employment within Sonoma County would reach about 192,000 jobs by year-2005, an increase of 75 percent over the amount of employment in 1980. Projections of future employment and population by the County of Sonoma are slightly lower than the equivalent projections by ABAG and DOF, primarily as a consequence of differing assumptions about the effects of infrastructure constraints on future growth. These constraints, principally limitations on expansion of wastewater treatment and disposal capacities and transportation capacities in the Highway 101 corridor linking Sonoma with Marin and San Francisco, have resulted in projections by the County of employment and population levels of 190,000 and 464,500, respectively, by year-2005.

**Directive:** In order to accommodate its fair share of future growth within the San Francisco Bay Area region, the County of Sonoma's land-use element shall establish policies which will enable the county and its cities to absorb the projected amount of growth in a manner consistent with environmental constraints, maintenance of the high quality of life enjoyed by existing residents, and the capacities of public facilities and services to accommodate the additional demands placed upon them.

### **Background Analysis:**

**Population Growth and Demographic Change.** The population projections upon which the land-use element is based are summarized in Table LU-1. Figure LU-2 illustrates the distribution of population among the nine planning regions. The population projection of 433,000 for the year-2000 assumes a declining rate of growth after 1980, although projected growth in absolute numbers would continue at a relatively high level. Average annual growth during the 20-year period from 1980 to 2000 would be about 6,700 persons, with net migration to the county from elsewhere in California and the nation accounting for about 70 percent of the annual growth. Growth after year-2000 is projected to occur at a slightly slower pace with the population reaching 464,500 by 2005. Although no year-2005 projection for the entire 9-county San Francisco Bay Area region is officially accepted, providing for 464,500 people in Sonoma County would undoubtedly increase the county's proportionate share of Bay Area population.



# POPULATION BY PLANNING AREA, SONOMA COUNTY, 1980-2005

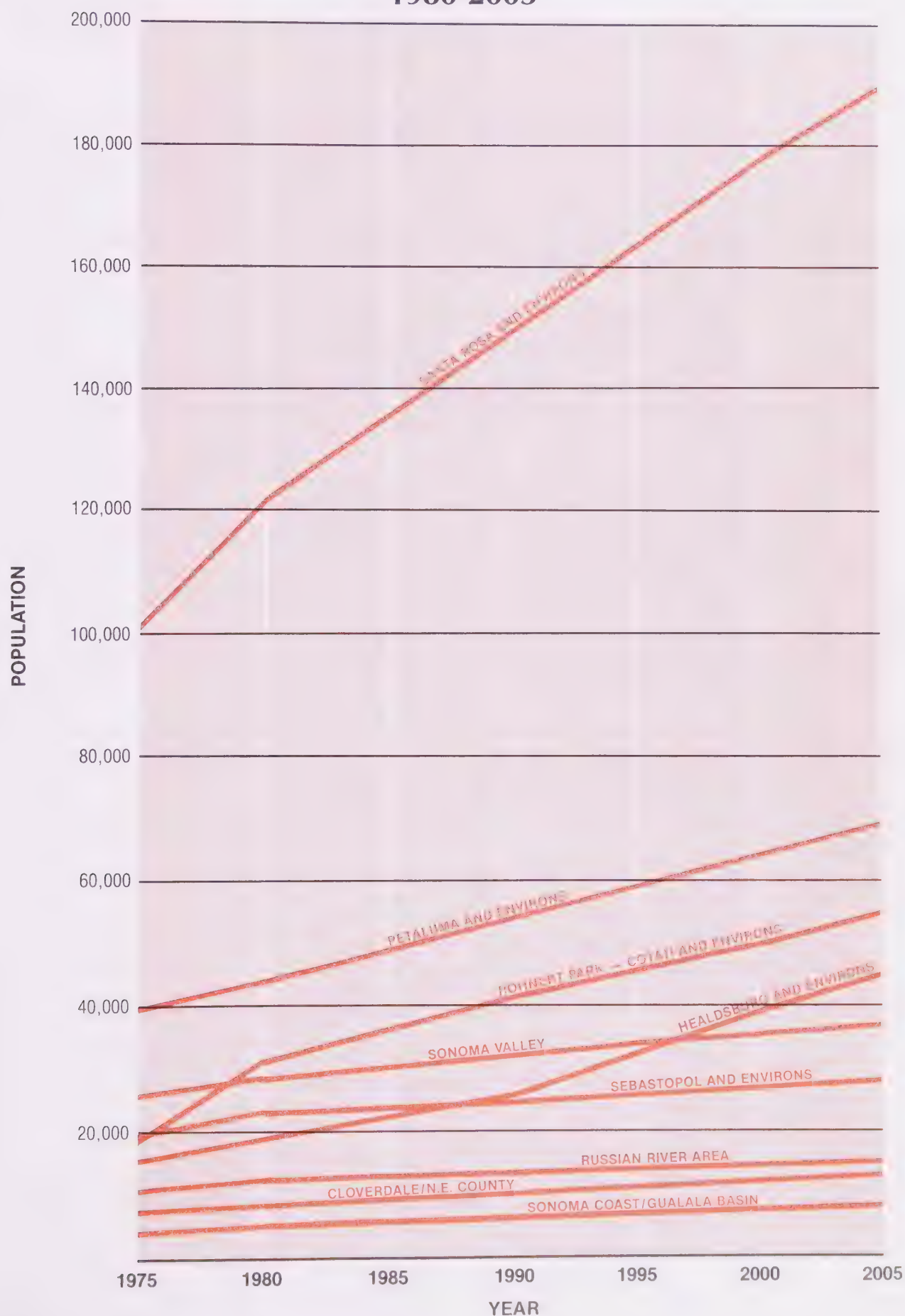


TABLE LU-1: POPULATION BY PLANNING AREA AND CITY, 1980 AND PROJECTED 1990, 2000, AND 2005

Planning Area	Actual 1980			P r o j e c t e d								
	City	Unincorp	Total	1990			2000			2005		
				City	Unincorp	Total	City	Unincorp	Total	City	Unincorp	Total
Sonoma Coast/Gualala	----	5,412	5,412	----	6,500	6,500	----	8,000	8,000	----	8,500	8,500
Cloverdale/N.E. County	3,989	4,991	8,980	5,300	5,200	10,500	7,100	5,400	12,500	8,200	5,600	13,800
Healdsburg and Environs	7,220	12,279	19,499	9,500	16,700	26,200	13,000	26,800	39,800	14,800	30,700	45,500
Russian River Area	----	13,007	13,007	----	14,120	14,120	----	15,200	15,200	----	15,800	15,800
Santa Rosa and Environs	83,320	39,542	122,862	117,000	34,200	151,200	150,000	28,000	178,000	165,000	25,000	190,000
Sebastopol and Environs	5,595	18,085	23,680	7,000	18,160	25,160	9,300	18,270	27,570	10,100	18,300	28,400
Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs	26,440	5,750	32,190	36,100	6,000	42,100	44,500	6,500	51,000	48,900	6,600	55,500
Petaluma and Environs	33,834	10,686	44,520	43,800	10,730	54,530	53,800	10,770	64,570	58,700	10,800	69,500
Sonoma Valley	6,054	23,477	29,531	8,350	24,540	32,890	10,650	25,280	35,930	11,800	25,700	37,500
COUNTY TOTAL	166,452	133,229	299,681	227,050	136,150	363,200	288,350	144,220	432,570	317,500	147,000	464,500

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing; Sonoma County Planning Department, projections.

DN:XULUT.1

Growth of the populations of the eight cities will be the result of in-migration of new residents and annexations of existing households who reside in developed unincorporated areas at the peripheries of the cities. Accordingly, net population change in unincorporated areas reflects losses due to annexations as well as in-migration of new residents. By year 2005, the eight cities would contain 67 percent of the county's population, compared with 56 percent in 1980. The emphasis upon urban growth is compatible with the growth and development policies of the eight cities.

Countywide, the number of households is expected to grow more rapidly than population, increasing by about 64 percent to 187,400 households in 2005 (Table LU-2). This pattern is associated with reduction in average household size from 2.56 persons per household in 1980 to 2.44 in 2005. Socioeconomic trends, including expansion of the elderly population, preferences by many single persons for living alone, slight reductions in fertility rates, postponement of marriage to an older age, and continuation of divorce rates at about the same level as in the past decade, account for the projected decline in average household size -- although future reductions would be modest compared with the past two decades. The number of households residing in unincorporated areas is expected to have a net increase of about 7,500 -- reflecting addition of 17,500 new households and loss of 9,960 households due to annexations by the eight cities, principally Santa Rosa.

**Labor Force and Employment.** The employment projections indicate robust growth for the county's economy over the next 20 years (Table LU-3). The resident labor force is projected to increase by about 98,000 persons, from 141,000 in 1980 to 239,000 in year-2005. The growing labor force reflects both the substantial increase in population and an increase in labor force participation rates. Women are expected to continue entering the labor market in greater numbers, more than offsetting a slight decline in the male labor force participation rate. To a large extent, the employment opportunities needed to meet the requirements of a population of 464,500 are expected to be available within the county, although some new residents will continue to have employment locations elsewhere in the Bay Area.

The composition of the local economy is projected to change significantly during the next two decades. The distribution of employment by industry (shown in Table LU-4) indicates a continued shift away from an economic base tied to physical or natural resources, such as lumber, agriculture, food processing, and mining, and the increasing dominance of what is termed "new technology" manufacturing and a service economy concentrated in retail trade. New technology industries -- which are characterized by the extensive use of scientific and technical personnel relative to total workforce, high expenditures for research and development relative to total sales, and a high degree of product sophistication -- include office and computing machines, scientific and precision instruments, optical instruments, computer and data processing products, communication equipment and services, drugs and medical instruments, and general electronic equipment. During the past decade, several



TABLE LU-2: SUMMARY OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC DATA, CITIES AND UNINCORPORATED AREA, 1980 TO 2005

	Actual 1980	Projected		Projected Change <sup>1</sup>	
		1990	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<u>County Total</u>					
Population Total	299,681	363,200	464,500	63,520	164,820
Population in Households	293,283	356,380	456,940	63,090	163,660
Population in Group Qrtrs.	6,398	6,820	7,560	430	1,160
Number of Households	114,474	143,550	187,410	29,080	72,930
Average Household Size	2.56	2.48	2.44	-0.08	-0.12
Housing Units (Year-round)	117,425	146,500	190,360	29,080	72,930
<u>Total, All Cities</u>					
Population Total	166,452	227,050	317,500	60,600	151,050
Population in Households	164,387	224,630	314,430	60,240	150,040
Population in Group Qrtrs.	2,065	2,420	3,070	360	1,010
Number of Households	65,198	91,650	130,590	26,450	65,400
Average Household Size	2.51	2.45	2.41	-0.06	-0.10
Housing Units (Year-round) <sup>2</sup>	66,948	90,340	122,390	23,390	55,440
<u>Total, Unincorporated Area</u>					
Population Total	133,229	136,150	147,000	2,920	13,770
Population in Households	128,896	131,750	142,520	2,850	13,620
Population in Group Qrtrs.	4,333	4,400	4,480	70	150
Number of Households	49,276	51,900	54,190	2,630	7,540
Average Household Size	2.60	2.54	2.51	-0.06	-0.09
Housing Units (Year-round) <sup>2</sup>	50,477	56,170	67,970	5,690	17,500

1. Calculated differences have been rounded.
2. Data for 1990 and 2005 reflect net change due to construction of new housing and annexations; projected change data indicate number of new housing units. The number of occupied units assumed to be annexed is 3,060 between 1980 and 1990 and 9,960 from 1980 through year-2005.

large-scale new-technology employers located facilities in the county and a number of smaller firms established operations; by 1980 employment in this industry group was estimated to total about 4,400. Although the workforce employed by these types of industries is expected to expand by about 13,000 during the 25 years to year-2005, this expansion would account for only one out of every six new jobs. Industrial firms will be attracted by a number of comparative advantages offered by the county: a sizable, well-educated labor force; coastal valley environments characterized by high amenity levels; comparatively inexpensive land and housing; proximity to existing "high tech" employment centers in the Santa Clara Valley and Bay Area; and a location accessible to the cultural opportunities of the Bay Area.

Another fundamental change in Sonoma County's economy is the increased importance of the "service" sector, especially retailing. Although its composition is difficult to measure, this sector encompasses both personal and business services, including retailers, wholesalers, transportation, communications, medical services, and other professional services. This sector is projected to grow more rapidly than the entire local economy in general and the sectors which produce tangible goods in particular. The county has reached a threshold level of population and business activity and is surrounded by a secondary market sufficient to support a regional center's array of retail and service industries. Employment gains in retail trade and locally-oriented services (business and personal) are projected to be the highest of any industries over the next 25 years, with workforce increases of about 18,000 and 14,300 respectively.

In 1980, an estimated 108,200 persons held jobs in Sonoma County, and approximately 25,000 other people commuted from residences in Sonoma County to workplaces in other counties, principally Marin, San Francisco, and Alameda (Table LU-3). Even with the projected expansion of employment opportunities within the county, the number of people living in Sonoma County and commuting to work elsewhere is likely to increase considerably over the 25-year period to 2005. However, the proportion of employed residents which commute to jobs outside the county is expected to decline somewhat; in 1980 about 19.5 percent of employed residents commuted to workplaces elsewhere, while the economic projections indicate this would be reduced to 17.9 percent by 2005.

One of the most important consequences of the general plan will be the retention in the agricultural industry of many jobs that would have been eliminated in a market growth situation. This retention of jobs is because implementation of the plan will result in keeping in productive agriculture a number of land areas that would have been lost to urban and rural "sprawl" under conditions described as "Baseline" in the General Plan EIR.

To some extent the population and economic projections for the nine sub-county planning regions reflect the influence of a policy of achieving a greater balance within each region between residential growth and growth in employment and commercial services. The concept of balanced growth is illustrated by Figure LU-3, which shows the jobs:population and jobs:employed residents ratios for the nine regions in 1980 and 2005 and for the increment of growth between those years.

TABLE LU-3: LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUTING: 1980, 1990 AND 2005

	Actual 1980	Projected		Projected Change <sup>1</sup>	
		1990	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<u>Total Population by Age Group</u>					
Age 0 - 4	20,622	26,120	27,890	5,500	7,270
Age 5 - 19	68,247	72,160	87,180	3,910	18,930
Age 20 - 44	116,203	148,770	157,810	32,570	41,610
Age 45 - 64	55,508	66,180	131,680	10,670	76,170
Age 65 +	40,919	49,970	59,940	9,050	19,020
<u>Labor Force (L F)</u>					
<u>Male</u>					
L F Eligible Population	110,496	133,610	176,140	23,110	65,640
L F Participation Rate (%)	73.9	72.5	71.7	- 1.4	- 2.2
Labor Force	81,605	96,870	126,290	15,270	44,690
<u>Female</u>					
L F Eligible Population	121,295	149,180	197,080	27,890	75,890
L F Participation Rate (%)	49.0	54.5	57.1	5.5	8.1
Labor Force	59,402	81,310	112,500	21,910	53,100
<u>Total</u>					
L F Eligible Population	231,791	282,790	373,220	51,000	141,430
L F Participation Rate (%)	60.8	63.0	64.0	2.2	3.2
Labor Force	141,007	178,180	238,790	37,170	97,780
<u>Employment in County</u>					
Basic	39,698	51,040	67,900	11,330	28,190
Population - Serving	68,470	89,380	121,820	20,920	53,360
Total	108,168	140,420	189,720	32,250	81,550
<u>Commuters</u>					
In-commuters	4,600	4,900	5,400	~ 300	800
Out-commuters	25,000	31,080	40,140	6,080	15,140
<u>Employed Residents</u>	128,561	166,600	224,460	38,040	95,900
<u>Unemployment</u>					
Unemployed Persons	12,446	11,580	14,330	-870	1,880
Rate of Unemployment (%)	8.8	6.5	6	-2.3	-2.8

1. Calculated differences have been rounded.

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**GOAL LU-1:** It is the County's goal that: 1) the development potential authorized by the land-use plan maps be closely correlated with projected population and economic growth within the unincorporated area, so that an adequate but not excessive supply of land is available for residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of development during the next 20 years; and 2) that growth within each of the nine planning regions achieve a greater balance among development types -- especially residential, commercial and employment-related uses -- so as to make services and employment opportunities available locally and to reduce the need for residents to travel long distances for such activities.

**Objective LU-1.1:** The land-use plan shall authorize sufficient lands to accommodate an additional 17,500 residential units within the unincorporated portions of the county during the next 20 year period to year-2005.

**Objective LU-1.2:** The land-use plan shall authorize limited quantities of land to accommodate new commercial and industrial development in unincorporated communities which have urban services; the major share of commercial-industrial growth shall be encouraged to occur within the county's eight cities.

**Objective LU-1.3:** The land-use plan map for each of the nine planning areas shall designate sufficient lands within the various use categories so as to permit an appropriate balance among residential development and commercial-industrial development -- subject to any constraints of environmental suitability, resource protection, and availability of adequate public services.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the County shall employ the following policies:

**LU-1a** The County shall utilize the specific plan mechanism in areas which are designated to have localized concentrations of commercial and/or industrial uses; specific plans shall establish phasing or sequencing mechanisms so that adequate but not excessive supplies of land are made available for development in a timely manner responsive to economic demand and with assurance of provision of adequate public services.

**LU-1b** The County shall utilize the specific plan mechanism to provide a more detailed plan for residential development within urban service areas; plans for such areas which were prepared prior to 1978 shall be reviewed and updated as appropriate so as to conform to the various requirements of this plan.

TABLE LU-4: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY: 1980, 1990, 2000 AND 2005

Industry	Estimated <sup>1</sup>	1990	Projected	2005	Projected Change	
	1980		2000		1980-1990	1980-2005
Basic Industries						
Agriculture	5,840	5,330	5,000	5,540	- 510	- 300
Mining	480	510	560	610	30	130
"New Technology" <sup>2</sup>	4,410	10,080	15,890	17,520	5,670	13,110
"Centralized Manufacturing" <sup>3</sup>	1,510	2,050	2,750	3,050	540	1,540
"Decentralized Manufacturing" <sup>4</sup>	6,110	7,230	7,940	8,720	1,120	2,610
Other Manufacturing <sup>5</sup>	2,540	3,020	3,330	3,680	480	1,140
Transportation	1,430	1,850	2,160	2,370	420	940
Trade	3,770	4,760	5,330	5,860	990	2,090
Finance/Insurance	1,980	2,400	2,610	2,870	420	890
Services	7,110	8,700	10,030	11,080	1,590	3,970
Federal/State Government	4,530	5,110	5,790	6,600	580	2,070
Subtotal	39,710	51,040	61,390	67,900	11,330	28,190
Population Serving Industries						
Construction	7,530	9,830	11,880	13,080	2,300	5,550
Transportation/Utilities	3,700	4,390	4,900	5,400	690	1,700
Retail Trade	22,110	29,530	36,360	40,140	7,420	18,030
Banking/Real Estate	4,310	5,900	7,530	8,320	1,590	4,010
Services	17,530	23,150	28,820	31,800	5,620	14,270
Local Government	13,280	16,580	21,020	23,080	3,300	9,800
Subtotal	68,470	89,380	110,510	121,820	20,920	53,360
Total	108,168	140,420	171,900	189,720	32,250	81,550

Source: Sonoma County Department of Planning, 1986

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Estimated from 1980 U.S. Bureau of the Census data, California Employment Development Department data, and Angus McDonald and Associates, et al, 1984, "Sonoma County General Plan Update Employment Trends Analysis and Revised Projections."

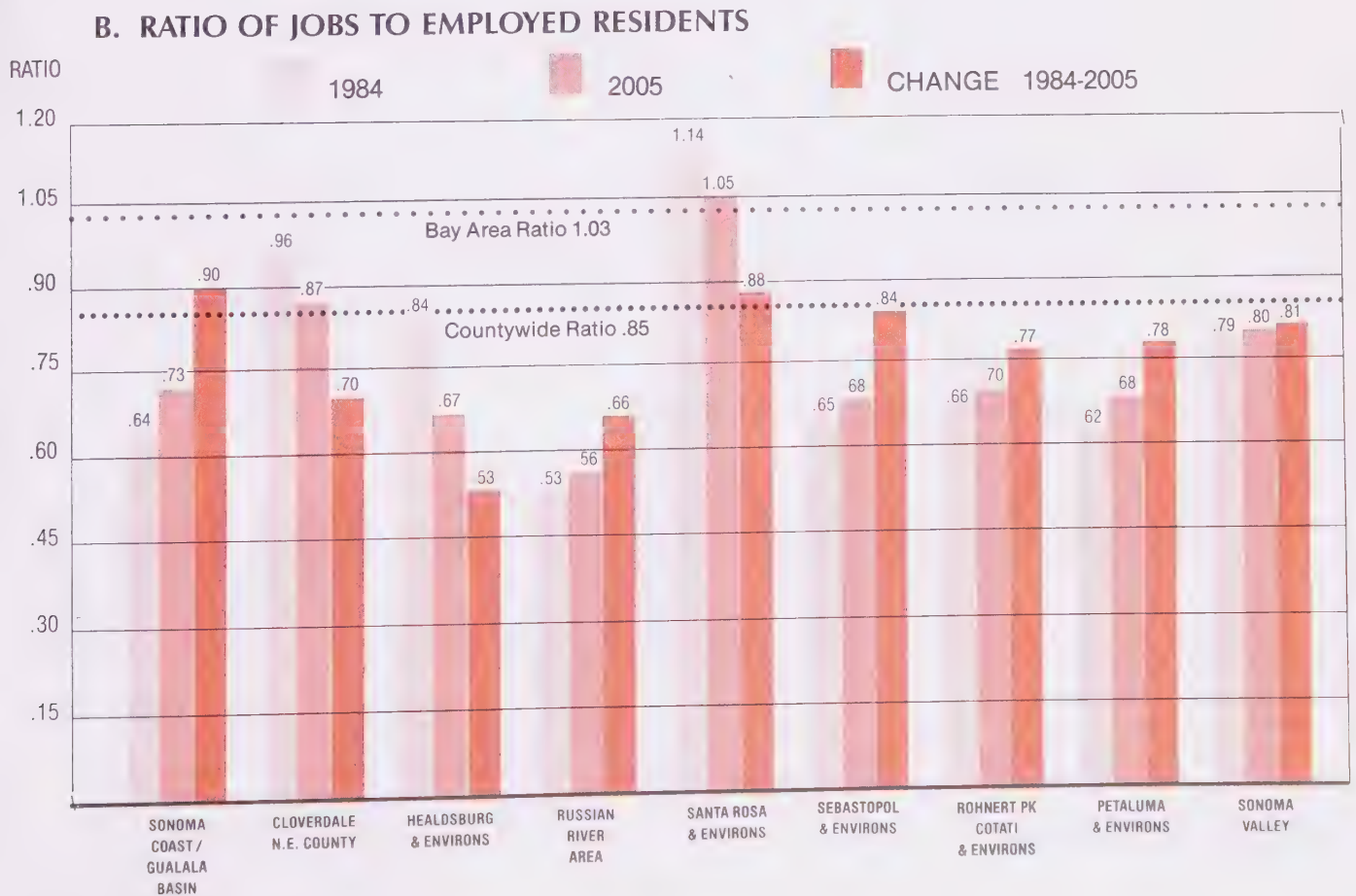
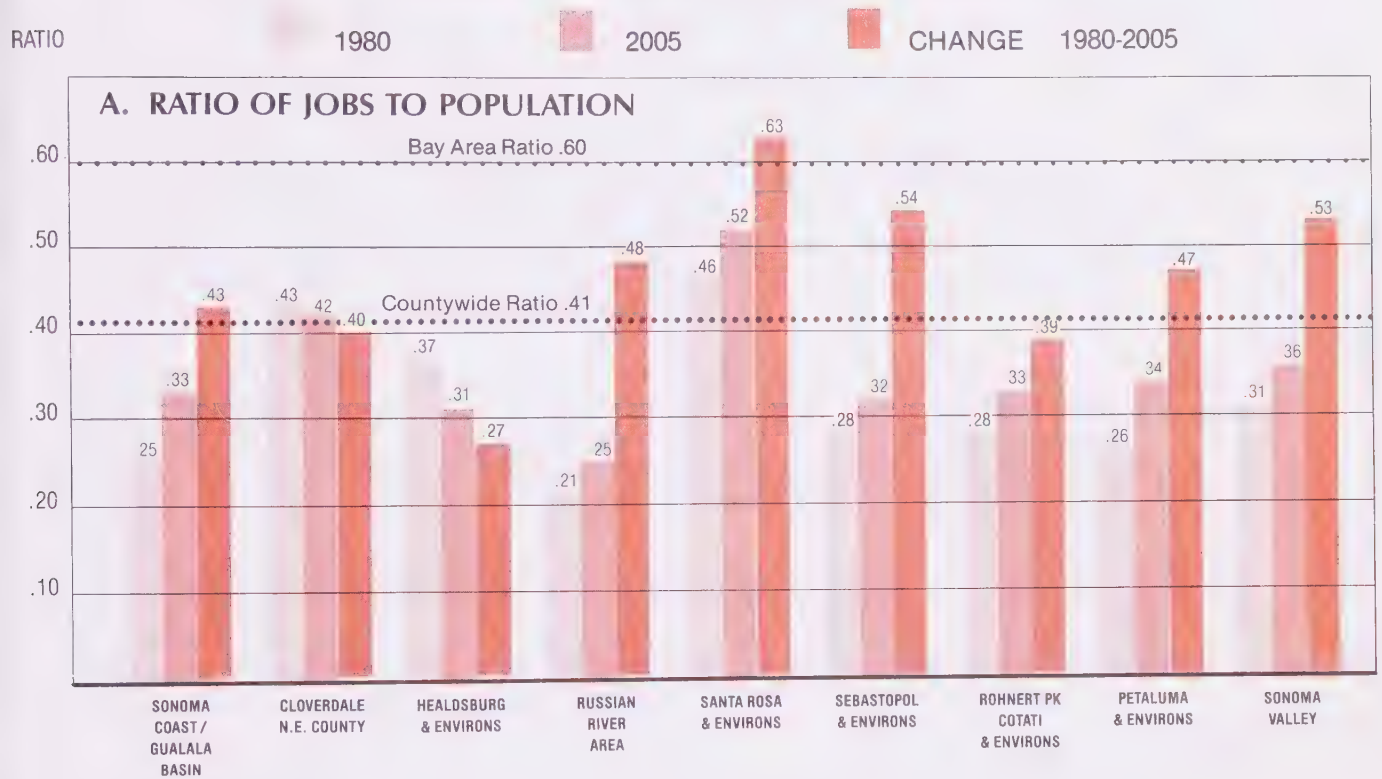
<sup>2</sup> Includes: Manufacturing of ordinance and accessories, electrical equipment and supplies, and instruments and related products.

<sup>3</sup> Includes: Textile mill products, apparel and other textile products, printing and publishing, rubber and plastic products, leather and leather goods.

<sup>4</sup> Includes: Food and kindred products, lumber and wood products, furniture and fixtures, paper and allied products, clay, sand, and glass products, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

<sup>5</sup> Includes: Fabricated metal products, machinery (except electrical), transportation equipment, chemicals and allied products, petroleum and coal products, and primary metal products.

# GREATER BALANCE BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT





- LU-1c** The County shall periodically review and update its projections of population and economic growth and revise the general plan as necessary or appropriate; such reviews and updates shall be prepared at least as frequently as every five years, with the first review to occur in 1989 to coincide with ABAG's completion of its determinations of regional housing needs.
- LU-1d** The County shall, upon adoption of this plan, undertake area-wide rezonings as necessary to bring zoning regulations and the zoning map into conformity with the plan as required by state law; area-wide zonings shall be accomplished separately for each of the nine sub-county planning regions.
- LU-1e** The County shall establish a growth monitoring system which measures the amount of building activity within the major use categories for each of the nine planning areas and for lands within the boundaries of each urban service area; summary reports shall be submitted annually to the Board of Supervisors.
- LU-1f** In the event that several periodic reports of the growth monitoring system indicate a continuing imbalance between residential and non-residential development within a particular planning area or urban service area, the County may establish a permit allocation procedure to either ration the number of residential permits or the number of commercial-industrial permits which may be approved on an annual basis -- depending on the direction of the imbalance.
- LU-1g** The County may utilize zonings to regulate the timing of residential and/or commercial development as appropriate to achieve balanced development or to assure availability of adequate public services; to accomplish this purpose, zonings may authorize a lower development potential than is authorized by the land-use plan maps.

### **2.1.2 City- and Community-centered Growth**

**Issues:** Future growth and development may be characterized in terms of the degree to which it is concentrated within certain limited locations versus being more generally dispersed over a larger land area. Generally, concentration of growth is thought to allow greater efficiency and economy in providing public services, to conserve agricultural and resource lands, and to afford greater opportunities for preserving the visual amenities and rural lifestyles desired by many of the county's residents. Conversely, a concentrated pattern of growth may add to traffic congestion in some areas and may not be as responsive to consumer preferences for living environments. For any particular amount of growth, the concentrated growth approach requires utilization of less land for development, since building would occur in areas of greater density.

# POLICY FOR CITY AND COMMUNITY-CENTERED GROWTH

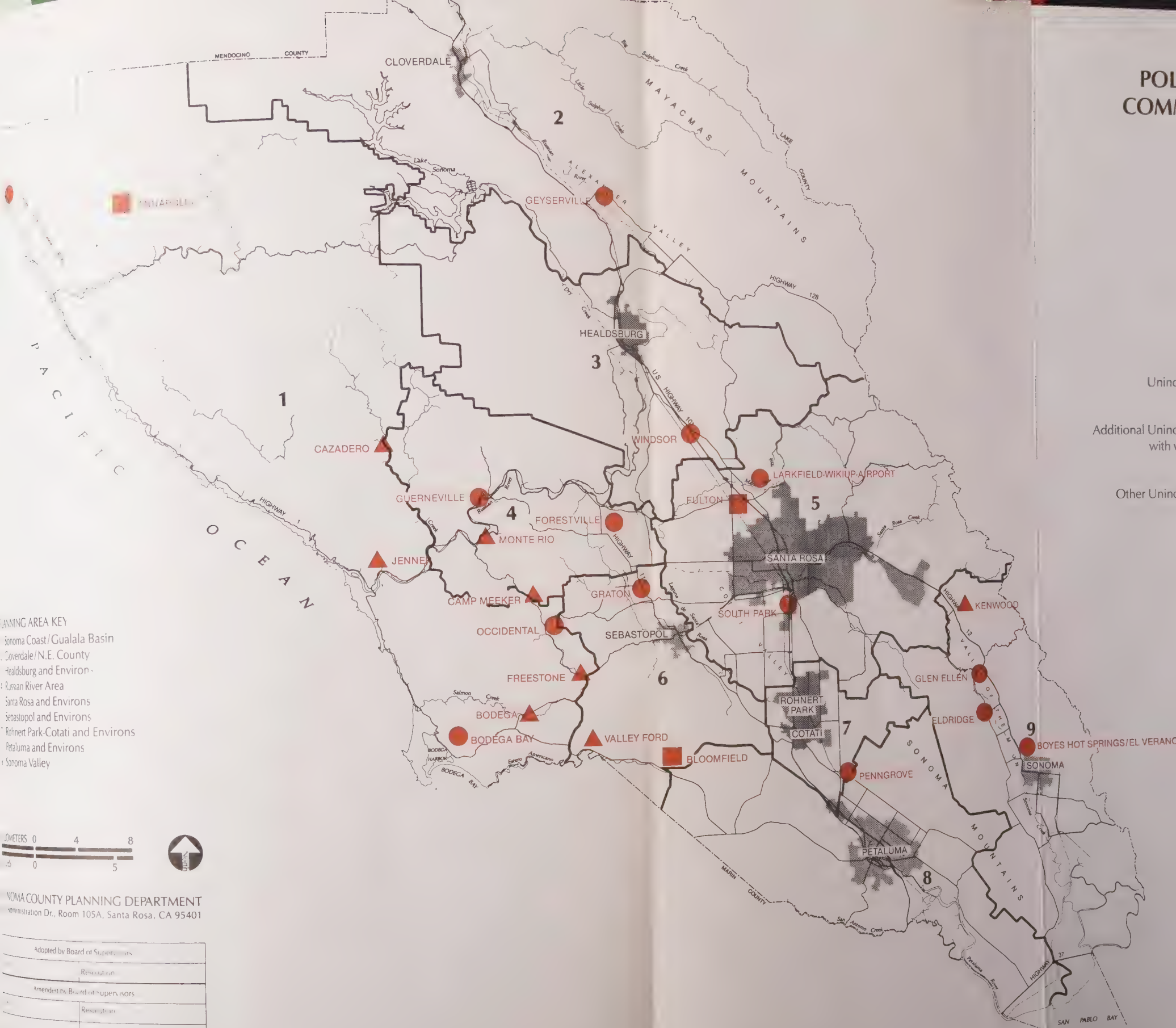
## LAND-USE ELEMENT

- Unincorporated Communities with sewer service ●
- Additional Unincorporated Communities with water distribution system ▲
- Other Unincorporated Communities ■

PLANNING AREA KEY  
 Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin  
 Cloverdale/N.E. County  
 Healdsburg and Environs  
 Russian River Area  
 Santa Rosa and Environs  
 Sebastopol and Environs  
 Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs  
 Petaluma and Environs  
 Sonoma Valley

SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Resolution	
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Resolution	







**Directive:** In order to utilize land resources more efficiently and to reduce the amount of rural land necessary to be developed during the next 20 years, the County of Sonoma's land-use element shall establish policies which will concentrate future growth and development within and adjacent to the eight cities and selected existing communities in the unincorporated portions of the county.

**Background:** In 1980, about 56 percent of the County's population resided in the eight cities, and 10 percent lived in a group of 22 unincorporated communities. According to the projections on which this plan is based, the combined populations of the eight cities would increase from 166,452 in 1980 to 317,500 by year-2005. The combined populations of 22 unincorporated communities would expand from 28,707 to about 60,000 by year-2005. Under these projections and the directives of this plan, the eight cities together would comprise 68 percent of the county's total population by year-2005 and the combined populations of the 22 communities would comprise 13 percent. The share of the county's population residing in rural areas, exclusive of the communities, would decline from 35 percent in 1980 to just 19 percent by year-2005. This decline is due in part to an assumed annexation of approximately 23,500 residents by the cities, principally Santa Rosa, during the 25-year projection period.

The unincorporated communities specified in this plan, as illustrated in Figure LU-4a, vary in terms of the availability of public water and sewerage systems. In 1986 the following 13 communities had such systems, although these systems did not necessarily have unused capacity available:

Windsor	Glen Elen
Agua Caliente	Guerneville
Bodega Bay	Larkfield-Wikiup
Boyes Hot Springs	Occidental
El Verano	Penngrove
Forestville	South Santa Rosa (South Park)
Geyserville	

The following seven communities had water systems but relied on individual septic systems for wastewater disposal:

Bodega	Kenwood
Cazadero	Monte Rio
Freestone	Valley Ford
Jenner	

Additionally, Graton had public sewerage facilities, but no public water system and the remaining identified communities had neither type of service.

The concept of city- and community-centered growth is illustrated in Figure LU-4b, which shows the proportions of the population resident in cities, unincorporated urban areas, other communities and rural areas for each of the nine planning regions in 1980 and 2005.

**GOAL LU-2:** It is the County of Sonoma's goal that the major share of future growth occur and be accommodated within the eight existing cities and their expansion areas and within selected unincorporated communities which are planned to have adequate water and sewer capacities.

**Objective LU-2.1:** The land-use plan shall accommodate a growth in population of about 30,500 in the group of 23 unincorporated communities; the largest amounts of growth shall be allocated to the Windsor and Larkfield-Wikiup communities, with moderate amounts to Bodega Bay, Guerneville, South Park, Penngrove, and Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano. The projected amount of growth for each community is indicated in the applicable planning area portion of Section 3.0 of this element.

**Objective LU-2.2:** The following communities shall be allocated more modest amounts of growth, in keeping with the limited capacities of their service systems or the absence of such systems: Geyserville, Occidental, Bodega, Cazadero, Freestone, Jenner, Forestville, Graton, Kenwood, Glen Ellen, Eldridge Monte Rio, Valley Ford, and Bloomfield. The land-use plan shall accommodate the amounts of population growth indicated in the applicable portion of Section 3.0 of this element.

**Objective LU-2.3:** The land-use plan maps shall limit the amount of population growth and development that is authorized in rural portions of the county, exclusive of the communities identified above; in general, the ratio of the projected population to residential holding capacity should range from 0.6 to 0.9.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the County's policy shall be as follows:

- LU-2a:** In considering future amendments to the land-use plan maps in rural areas, an excess of residential holding capacity of 50 percent or more beyond that needed to accommodate projected growth shall be grounds for disapproving a proposed amendment.
- LU-2b:** Previously adopted specific plans in effect as of the date of this plan shall be reviewed and any specific plan amendments which are necessary or appropriate to conform to the provisions of this element shall be initiated.
- LU-2c:** Priority in revision of specific plans shall be given to those plans which were adopted during or before 1978 and which encompass communities or lands with urban services; These specific plans include: South Sonoma Valley Area I, South Sonoma Valley Area II, Forestville, and Geyserville.



# PROPORTION OF POPULATION IN CITIES, COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AREAS, 1980 AND 2005

## LAND-USE ELEMENT

### YEAR

1980

2005

### AREA

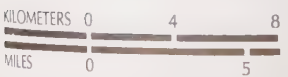
Cities

Unincorporated Urban Areas

Other Communities

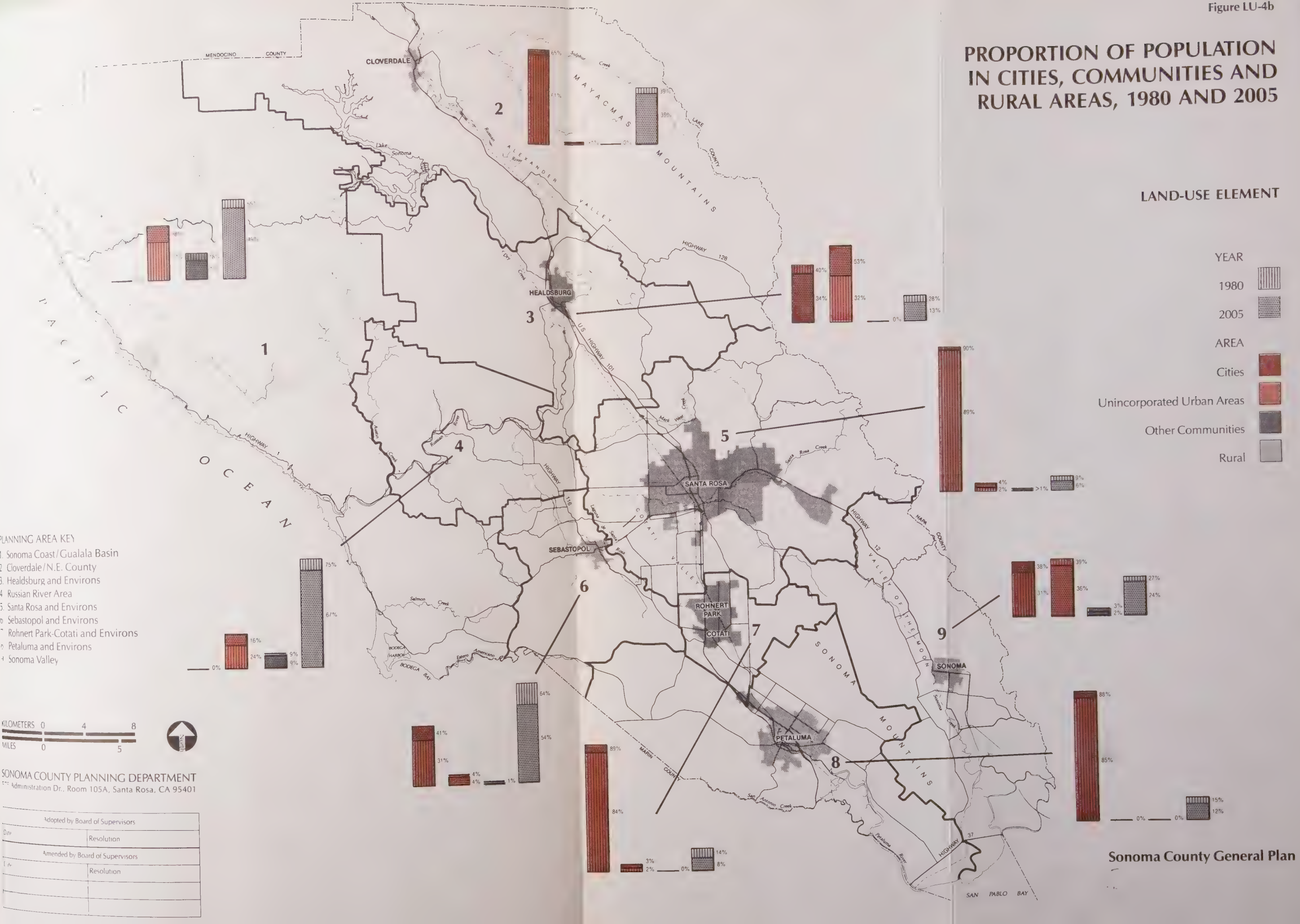
Rural

- PLANNING AREA KEY
- 1. Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
  - 2. Cloverdale/N.E. County
  - 3. Healdsburg and Environs
  - 4. Russian River Area
  - 5. Santa Rosa and Environs
  - 6. Sebastopol and Environs
  - 7. Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
  - 8. Petaluma and Environs
  - 9. Sonoma Valley



SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
c/o Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution







### **2.1.3 Compact City and Community Boundaries**

**Issues:** Development patterns wherein new urban development occurs on lands near but not contiguous to existing development are thought to encourage "sprawl" and to result in more-costly public services. Such "leap-frog" development may be prohibited by establishing future city and urban service area boundaries which encompass sufficient lands to accommodate growth by "infill" development on vacant parcels and development of adjacent parcels at the periphery. Another aspect of the problem is the level at which standards for density and building intensity should be established within cities and urban service areas: greater densities and building intensities may result in a smaller amount of land needed for future urban development but may also adversely affect existing neighborhoods in some instances. The issue also encompasses the question of appropriate residential densities for lands just outside the future urban service area boundary. Alternative approaches in these areas include "feathering", where rural residential densities gradually decrease to the agricultural level, or a "holding zone" method wherein permitted densities are low in order to reserve lands for future urban development beyond year-2005.

**Directive:** The approach of County of Sonoma's land-use element shall be to establish policies which promote compact city and community expansion areas for the 20-year planning period to year-2005. The approach in general shall be to establish densities on lands adjacent to but outside the boundaries of such expansion areas which will retain large parcel sizes for efficient urban development beyond year-2005.

**GOAL LU-3:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that future growth within the cities and unincorporated urban service areas occur in a compact manner utilizing vacant "infill" parcels and lands contiguous to existing development at the peripheries of such areas.

**Objective LU-3.1:** It is the objective of this plan to identify appropriate boundaries for expansion areas to year 2005 for the eight cities so that the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) may consider this information when adopting or amending its spheres-of-influence for each city.

**Objective LU-3.2:** It is the objective of this plan to establish appropriate boundaries for expansion areas to year 2005 for each of the urban service areas in the unincorporated portion of the county.

**Objective LU-3.3:** The amounts of land authorized by the land-use plan maps for expansion of cities and unincorporated urban service areas shall be adequate to accommodate projected urban residential growth but shall not in general exceed the needed amounts of land by more than 20 percent; the quantities of land planned for new urban development within each region are identified in the applicable portion of Section 3.0 of this element.

**Objective LU-3.4:** It is the County's objective that new development within the expansion areas of cities and unincorporated urban service areas proceed in a manner which uses parcels contiguous to existing development before those that are not contiguous, wherever practicable.

**Objective LU-3.5:** It is the County's objective that parcel sizes of at least 10 acres be maintained whenever practicable in adjacent areas outside the expansion boundaries of the cities and unincorporated urban service areas, in order to reserve those lands which may be appropriate for future urban development after year-2005.

The following policies shall be utilized to achieve the foregoing objectives:

- LU-3a:** The County and its various agencies shall not be authorized to submit proposals to LAFCO for spheres-of-influence or amendments thereto for County Service Areas (CSAs) or other county-controlled special districts until written findings have been made by the Planning Director or the Planning Commission that such proposals include only those lands which are within the expansion area or urban service boundary designated by this plan.
- LU-3b:** The Planning Director shall submit a report to LAFCO when it is considering a proposal to adopt or amend a sphere-of-influence for a city or for a special district with its own elected Board of Directors; the report shall indicate whether or not the proposal is in conformity with the urban service boundary and other applicable provisions of this plan.
- LU-3c:** In considering future proposals for amendments to the land-use plan maps in urban service areas which would increase residential development potential, an excess of residential holding capacity of 20 percent or more beyond that needed to accommodate projected growth shall be grounds for denial of the proposed amendment.
- LU-3d:** As updates of specific plans which encompass unincorporated urban service areas occur, any revisions necessary or appropriate to specify expansion boundaries shall be evaluated; expansion of the boundaries beyond those indicated in this plan shall be approved only if findings are made that: 1) the service entity has the ability to provide the service to the subject area within five years; 2) the supply of vacant and underdeveloped land within the service area following the boundary expansion would accommodate no more than five years of planned growth.
- LU-3e:** Specific plans and zonings may be utilized to establish "urban reserves" or holding zones in appropriate areas outside designated urban service boundaries in order to limit rural development and maintain lands with parcel sizes which are efficient for future urban development beyond year-2005.



**LU-3f:** Specific plans encompassing unincorporated urban service areas shall establish mechanisms which phase or sequence land development with availability of adequate public services and facilities; priority shall be given to infill development on vacant lands within an existing service area before services are extended to contiguous lands at the periphery.

**LU-3g:** Extensions of urban services beyond a designated urban service area boundary or proposals to provide service connections to parcels outside the boundary shall not be approved. Exceptions to this general policy may be authorized only in situations where there are demonstrated health problems associated with existing septic systems. Any exceptions shall be limited to just those parcels with demonstrated septic failures and shall not be a basis for authorizing any new development. Out-of-service-area agreements rather than annexations shall be the preferred method of extending services in such instances.

#### **2.1.4 Phasing of Rural and Urban Growth with Availability of Adequate Public Services**

**Issues:** If the provision of public services and facilities does not keep pace with the amount of development, the quality of services received by existing and new residents may deteriorate and adversely affect their health, safety, or well-being. These services include roadways, law enforcement, fire protection and education in both rural and urban areas and water, sewerage, and parks in urban service areas. Since Proposition 13, expansions of services and facilities have commonly been financed by new development rather than by the community at large. Requirements that all services be in place prior to approval of new development, however, could have the effect of precluding any new development at all.

**Directive:** Adequate public services are essential to the well-being of existing and new residents; the Land-use Element shall establish policies which correlate the level of land development and growth to be authorized with the ability to provide acceptable levels of service and shall further establish measures to phase or sequence new development with timely provision of any needed expansions of services or facilities.

**GOAL LU-4:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that adequate levels of public services be maintained in both rural and urban service areas and that additional growth or development not be authorized or approved until it is established that any necessary or appropriate expansion of services will be provided in a timely manner.

**Objective LU-4.1:** The level of development authorized by the land-use plan and approvals of development permits shall be consistent with maintenance of a "C" or "D" level of service on those roadways which are designated as arterials or collectors in the circulation and transit element of this plan.

**Objective LU-4.2:** The level of development authorized by the land-use plan and approvals of individual development permits shall be consistent with the capacities of and standards for school and park facilities and with maintenance of acceptable access and response times for public safety services, as expressed in the public safety and public facilities elements of this plan.

**Objective LU-4.3:** The level of development authorized by the land-use plan and approvals of discretionary permits for individual development projects shall be consistent with the existing or planned capacities of water systems and public wastewater management systems -- including collection, treatment, and disposal facilities.

The following policies shall be utilized to accomplish the foregoing objectives.

**LU-4a:** In some areas, zonings may authorize a lesser amount of development than the land-use plan map; requests for rezonings to permit a greater amount of development shall be approved only if it is determined that: a) the existing service capacities are adequate to maintain an acceptable level of service; or b) specific improvements to service capacities which will be made by the County, other appropriate public agency, or the developer will assure maintenance of an acceptable level of service.

**LU-4b:** Specific plans encompassing unincorporated urban service areas shall establish procedures for phasing development with availability of adequate services and for requiring that approvals of individual development permits be conditioned upon specific commitments or agreements to construct or finance any necessary or appropriate facilities, or pro rata share thereof, to maintain adequate service levels.

**LU-4c:** For those public service facilities which are provided by the County of Sonoma or an agency thereof, it shall be the County's policy that long-range plans for those facilities be prepared so as to provide the service capacity that will be required to accommodate the projected amount of growth or the amount of development authorized by the land-use plan map. Facility master plans shall not be based upon growth assumptions which exceed the holding capacity of the land-use plan by more than the normal and generally accepted engineering contingency factors.



## **2.1.5 Open Space Separation Between Cities/Communities**

**Issues:** Maintenance of the identity of each of the County's individual cities and communities by providing expanses of lands between them which retain their natural characteristics and are not intensively developed is an important aspect of the quality of life for many of the county's residents. Large, continuous areas of urban development where one city or community merges with another without any form of visual relief from urban activities are thought to detract from a person's ability to identify with and productively contribute to maintenance of his or her community and to detract from a person's psychological well-being. Land areas between cities and communities, especially within the Highway 101 corridor, are often considered by property owners and developers to be prime lands for urban development due to their accessibility. Many property owners in such areas express concerns that their property values may be unfairly restrained by open space policies.

**Directive:** Reservation of open space lands between the various cities and communities is an important factor in maintaining the quality of life of Sonoma County's residents and shall be established as a priority by the policies of land-use element, and shall be correlated with the policies expressed in the open space element.

**GOAL LU-5:** It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma that important open space areas between the county's cities and communities be identified and that such lands be maintained in an open or natural character with very low intensities of development and utilization.

**Objective LU-5.1:** It shall be a high priority of the County to designate and preserve open space "separators" between cities and communities along the Highway 101 corridor and within the central Sonoma County area between: Petaluma and Novato, Petaluma and Rohnert Park-Cotati, Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa and Windsor, Windsor and Healdsburg, Santa Rosa and Kenwood, Kenwood and Glen Ellen, and Santa Rosa and Sebastopol -- as illustrated in Figure LU-5.

**Objective LU-5.2:** It shall be the county's objective that the land-use element authorize only very low intensities of development and human utilization on lands designated within community separator open space areas; while authorized uses may not be the "highest and best" use of such lands, no parcel of land shall be denied some reasonable economic use.

**Objective LU-5.3:** It is the county's objective that residential uses within community separator open space areas not exceed one unit per 20 acres and that commercial and industrial uses shall not occur on any parcel within these open space areas.



The County shall employ the following policies to accomplish these objectives:

- LU-5a:** The County of Sonoma and its various agencies shall not approve expansion of urban service area boundaries or extensions of urban services such as sewer lines and water mains into any land area which is within a designated open space separator, nor shall connections of any parcel therein to existing facilities be approved.
- LU-5b:** Specific plans in effect as of the date of adoption of this plan shall be revised as necessary and appropriate to include the community separator open space lands designated by this plan and to include any appropriate implementing measures.
- LU-5c:** Zoning districts which authorize commercial, industrial, or high intensity recreation uses shall not be approved for any parcel or for a portion of any parcel which is within a designated community separator open space area.
- LU-5d:** No discretionary development permits, including but not limited to use permits, major and minor subdivisions, and design review, shall be approved which would allow commercial, industrial, or recreation uses on lands which are designated as part of a community separator open space area.
- LU-5e:** Zonings for lands within designated community separator open space areas shall not authorize any residential density which is greater than one unit per 20 acres, except for those lands where zonings in effect as of December 31, 1986, permitted densities as high as one unit per 10 acres.
- LU-5f:** In approving discretionary development permits which utilize the maximum development authorized by the land-use plan map, including use permits and subdivisions among others, on any parcel larger than 20 acres located within the designated community separator open space areas, the County shall require dedication of 20-year scenic easements in favor of the County on the undeveloped portion of the parcel. The language of such easements shall prohibit construction of any additional structures other than those associated with agricultural use of the property.
- LU-5g:** It shall be the intent of the County to prepare and adopt an ordinance which will authorize the County to accept Open Space Easements conveyed pursuant to the California Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Government Code Sections 51070-51097), which provides a means by which, in exchange for an easement granted either in perpetuity or for as few as ten years to the County, a landowner can obtain use-related property tax assessment on his or her lands.

# OPEN SPACE SEPARATOR AREAS BETWEEN CITIES AND/OR COMMUNITIES

## LAND-USE ELEMENT

Unincorporated Urban Communities



Community Separator Areas



### PLANNING AREA KEY

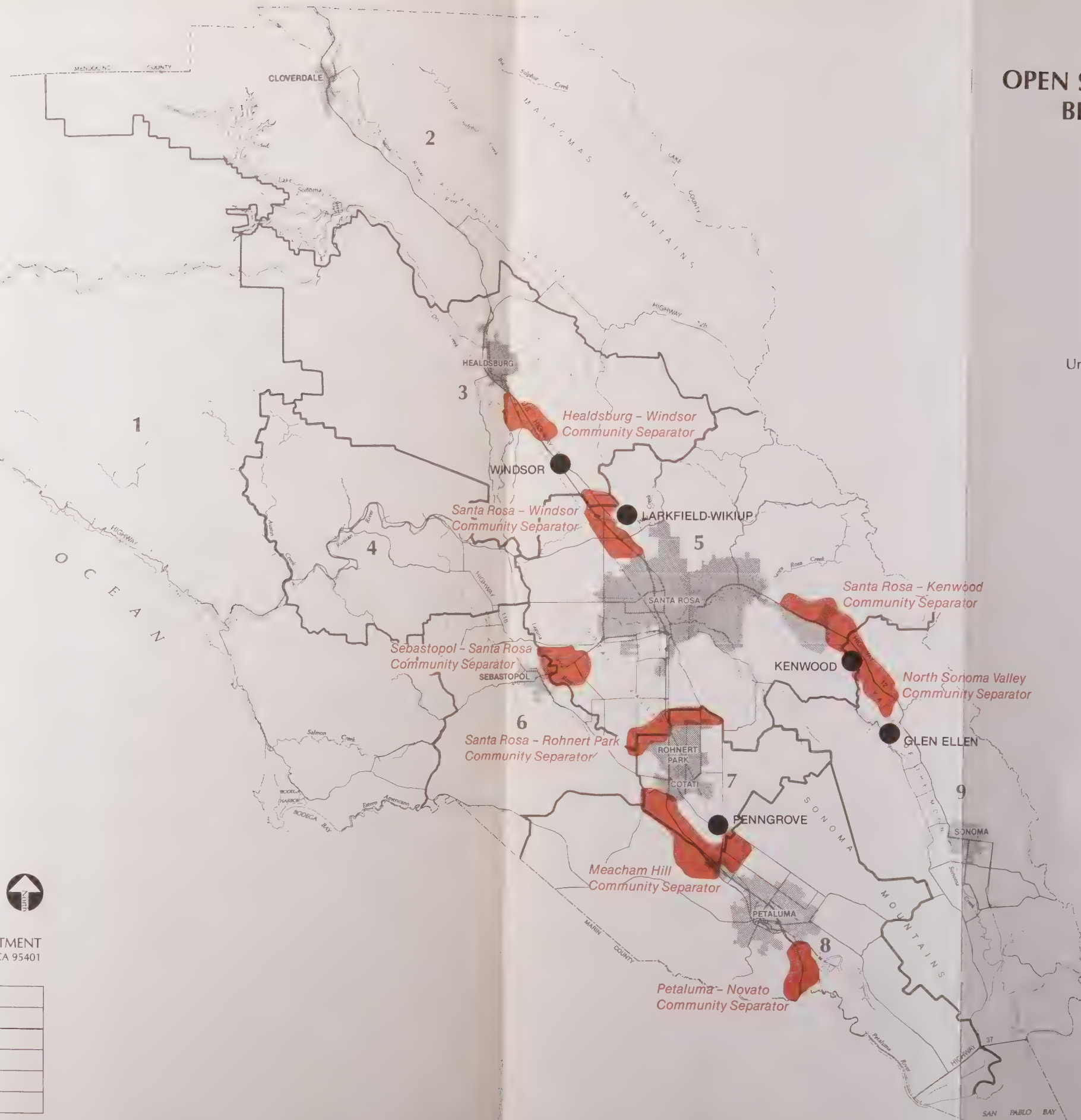
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9. Sonoma Valley

KILOMETERS 0 4 8  
MILES 0 5



SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
575 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution







## **2.1.6 Opportunities for Diverse Rural and Urban Residential Environments**

**Issues:** The County of Sonoma has historically permitted development of extensive areas of rural residential and "ranchette" development on lots ranging in size from one to 20 acres. The view of some citizens is that additional use of land for this purpose would be wasteful of scarce rural land resources and that when located within or near agricultural areas these uses are often incompatible with commercial agricultural operations. Others believe that additional opportunities for this type of development should be provided since it is an important component of the lifestyle sought by many county and Bay Area residents. Another dimension of the issue pertains to the types of residential environments that are permissible within communities and unincorporated urban service areas. One viewpoint is that opportunities for new housing of diverse types and densities, including less-expensive multi-unit housing, should be allowed in the communities. Existing residents of those communities, however, frequently oppose new residential development that is different in density, type, or style than the existing residential neighborhood.

**Directive:** It is in the interest of present and future residents of Sonoma County that the land-use element provide opportunities for new residential development in diverse settings, including a variety of housing types and densities within unincorporated urban service areas and opportunities for new rural residential development in certain limited areas, principally as "infill" development within existing rural residential areas.

**GOAL LU-6:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that new residential development, in a cumulative countywide perspective, be of diverse types and densities, including: a range of urban densities and housing types in the cities and some unincorporated urban service areas; lower density in the more-rural communities; some additional large-lot and "ranchette" type housing in several limited rural areas; and limited housing in agricultural and resource areas for workers and family members who have resource-related occupations.

**Objective LU-6.1:** It is the County's objective that opportunities for a range of urban housing types and densities be provided in the following communities: Windsor, Larkfield-Wikiup, South Park, Bodega Bay, Guerneville, Forestville, and Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano/Agua Caliente.

**Objective LU-6.2:** It is the County's objective that the unincorporated communities retain a rural village character which distinguishes them from the living environments found in the eight cities.

**Objective LU-6.3:** It is the County's objective that densities of new residential development in those communities which lack sewerage systems not exceed one dwelling per acre.

**Objective LU-6.4:** It is the County's objective that any new rural residential or ranchette development be limited to "infill" in those areas that already have concentrations of these uses.

The County shall employ the following policies in achieving these objectives:

- LU-6a:** Specific plans which encompass lands in the following communities shall permit a variety of residential densities and structure types within the urban service boundary in a manner consistent with public service capacities and with community character: Windsor, Larkfield-Wikiup, South Park, Bodega Bay, Forestville, Guerneville, and Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano/Agua Caliente.
- LU-6b:** Specific plans, amendments thereto, and zonings shall not authorize rural residential or ranchette development beyond those land areas which are designated for this use within the land-use element.
- LU-6c:** Site-specific physical and environmental factors, including but not limited to availability of water for domestic use and suitability of soils for septic waste disposal, shall be considered in making decisions on discretionary permits such as major and minor subdivisions; these parcel-specific factors may at times preclude approval of development at densities which are allowed by the land-use plan map and zoning.
- LU-6d:** Proposals to amend the land-use plan maps to allow additional rural residential development are discouraged and shall not be approved unless the following determinations are made: 1) the cumulative amount of residential development authorized would be consistent with public service capacities and acceptable levels of service would be maintained; 2) the additional residential development authorized is not in an agricultural production area and would not adversely affect agricultural operations; 3) the additional development is on lands with an adequate supply of groundwater and with soils which are adequate for septic waste disposal; 4) the additional residential development to be authorized is not on lands which have important natural features or resources which should be retained; and 5) the supply of vacant residential building sites combined with potential new sites allowed by the plan within the sub-county planning area are insufficient to accommodate the projected growth.

#### **2.1.7 Utilization of Environmental Suitability Criteria in Locating and Guiding Rural and Urban Growth**

**Issues:** Lands in various portions of Sonoma County are characterized by conditions which, if the lands were to be developed, could result in unnecessary or unacceptable exposure of people and property to environmental risks or hazards. These include lands subject to flooding, fault zones and seismic hazards, hillsides subject to slope instability and slides, scarcity of groundwater, impermeable soils with poor percolation for septic disposal of



sewage and hills with vegetative cover subject to severe fire hazard during the summer months. Some lands possess natural characteristics which make them especially sensitive and vulnerable to irreversible environmental damage if they were to be intensely developed. These various features of land may be characterized as constraints which may preclude development or limit the intensities at which development is permitted. Many of these same characteristics, however, are associated with environments considered to be attractive as residential locations. Viewpoints differ with regard to the types and intensities of development which should be permitted on lands subject to these conditions.

**Directive:** In order to prevent unnecessary exposure of people and property to environmental risks and hazards and to protect lands that are especially vulnerable to environmental damage, the Land-use Element shall establish policies and land-use plan map designations which correlate the types and intensities of development allowed with the natural characteristics of the land.

**GOAL LU-7:** It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma that the types and intensities of development in rural and urban areas be consistent with the environmental characteristics and suitabilities of lands, in a manner that minimizes exposure of persons and property to natural hazards and protects environmentally sensitive lands.

**Objective LU-7.1:** It is the County's objective that development which entails construction of new structures or modification of land contours not be permitted to occur within floodways and that other lands within the 100-year floodplain be restricted by limitations on permitted uses and densities and/or by protective building standards.

**Objective LU-7.2:** It is the County's objective that development not occur on any land area with an average slope greater than 30 percent, except that no parcel shall be rendered undevelopable in its entirety.

**Objective LU-7.3:** It is the County's objective that permitted residential densities for new development not exceed one unit per 20 acres in areas near fault zones except where authorized by specific plans in effect as of December 31, 1986, and that construction be prohibited within 50 feet of known potentially active fault lines.

**Objective LU-7.4:** It is the County's objective that residential densities not exceed one unit per 20 acres in woodland areas which are subject to "moderate" or "severe" fire hazard as determined by the California Department of Forestry.

**Objective LU-7.5:** It is the County's objective that the types and intensities of development in rural areas be consistent with availability of adequate groundwater supplies and soil conditions which permit adequate wastewater disposal through individual septic systems; no residential building site shall be smaller than one and one-half acres when utilizing an individual well and septic system.



**Objective LU-7.6:** The intensity of development within rural areas shall be compatible with maintenance of a supply of groundwater which is adequate in quantity and quality to meet the needs of all potential users.

**Objective LU-7.7:** It is the County's objective that residential densities not exceed one unit per 20 acres in areas with known landslides or with soils and slopes which are unstable.

The County shall utilize the following policies:

**LU-7a:** Specific plans and zonings for lands subject to environmental constraints shall conform to the directives of this plan.

**LU-7b:** Project review procedures shall be established for discretionary planning and development permits which assure that building envelopes are located so as to avoid potential environmental hazards.

## **2.1.8 Preservation of Agricultural Lands**

**Issues:** Sonoma County encompasses lands with many types of agricultural production, including premium winegrapes, orchards, dairies, forage crops, specialty crops, and livestock. Agriculturalists include full-time ranchers and farm operators as well as those who engage in agricultural production on a part-time basis to supplement incomes from other occupations. Continued agricultural production in some areas of the county is threatened by pressures of urban development or by creation of small parcels for residential use in the midst of agricultural lands, as well as by fluctuations in markets for agricultural commodities and the economics of farm operations. The extent to which additional small parcels should be allowed for residential purposes, the ability to provide agricultural support services in rural areas, and the compatibility or incompatibility of visitor-serving uses are important issues regarding land-use policy for agricultural lands.

**Directive:** Agriculture and related industries contribute substantially to the economy and quality of life of Sonoma County and its residents; the land-use element shall establish policies which will promote and conserve the County's agricultural economy and the resources on which it depends -- including lands with soils that make them potentially suitable for agricultural use in the future.

**GOAL LU-8:** It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma that lands currently devoted to agricultural production and lands with soils and other characteristics which make them potentially suitable for agricultural use be preserved in a manner so that large parcel sizes are retained and incompatible residential or commercial uses do not occur.

**Objective LU-8.1:** It is the County's objective that lands currently used for agricultural production and which are located outside the urban service boundaries shown on the land-use plan maps, not be converted to non-agricultural uses.

**Objective LU-8.2:** It is the County's objective that large parcel sizes be retained in agricultural production areas, and that any new parcels created not be smaller than 40 acres in productive vineyard areas.

**Objective LU-8.3:** It is the County's objective that lands not currently used for agricultural production which have soils and other characteristics which make them suitable for future agricultural use not be developed in a manner which would preclude such future use.

**Objective LU-8.4:** It is the County's objective that residential densities not exceed one unit per 20 acres in any agricultural area designated for vineyards, one unit per 60 acres in any area designated for livestock and forage crops, and one unit per 10 acres in any area designated for diverse agricultural production.

**Objective LU-8.5:** It is the County's objective that limited small-scale agricultural service businesses and visitor-serving uses which assist in marketing local farm products be accommodated in or near selected agricultural areas.

The following policies shall be employed by the County to attain these objectives:

**LU-8a:** Extensions of water and sewer lines into any land area designated for agricultural production by the land-use plan map shall not be approved; connections of parcels located in such areas to existing water or sewer lines shall not be approved.

**LU-8b:** The AE (exclusive agriculture) or A-1 (primary agriculture) zoning districts shall be required for any land area designated for agricultural production; any applicable combining districts shall conform to the density, minimum lot-size, and use-limitation requirements of the Land-use Element.

**LU-8c:** An agricultural services zoning district or combining district shall be added to the zoning ordinance in order to permit agricultural service businesses in selected appropriate locations.

**LU-8d:** An easement which restricts future non-agricultural development to the maximum number of dwellings or lots authorized by the land-use plan map shall be required for all residual parcels of 40 or more acres as a condition of approval of any tentative map which subdivides land with an agricultural use designation.



**LU-8e:** The County shall encourage that voluntary conservation easements be conveyed to the county, or to an appropriate non-profit agency at the discretion of the property owner, when any major or minor subdivision is approved on agricultural lands which utilizes the maximum density authorized by this plan.

**LU-8f:** A zoning combining district which restricts parcel sizes to the sizes shown on the Assessor's Parcel Maps shall be required for all lands encompassed by the original subdividing parcel following approval of a subdivision of land with an agricultural use designation which results in the maximum number of lots authorized by the land-use plan map.

### **2.1.9 Preservation of Unique or Important Natural Areas**

**Issues:** The boundaries of Sonoma County encompass many land areas with unique or important natural features or scenic qualities which are environmentally sensitive and especially vulnerable to degradation if development were to occur at any but the lowest intensity of human use. These include important wetlands near San Pablo Bay and along the Petaluma River; various coastal areas including tidal lands, dunes, sea cliffs, marine terraces, and headlands; various watershed areas; wetlands along the Laguna de Santa Rosa; and various unique geologic formations and local ecological systems which may include rare or endangered plant or animal species. Issues pertain to the types of uses and intensities of development that are compatible with preservation of these resources and concerns of property owners about the potential effects of any development restrictions on property values.

**Directive:** Many unique or important natural and scenic features contribute to the high quality of life enjoyed by the county's residents; the land-use element shall establish policies which will preserve these features and prevent those types and intensities of development which would result in degradation of their quality.

**GOAL LU-9:** It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma that the uses and intensities of any land development authorized by the land-use plan map be consistent with protection and preservation of important natural and scenic features.

**Objective LU-9.1:** It is the County's objective that commercial and industrial uses not occur on lands which contain important natural or scenic features.

**Objective LU-9.2:** It is the County's objective that residential densities not exceed one unit per 20 acres on any lands which contain important natural or scenic features.

**Objective LU-9.3:** It is the County's objective that any development that may be authorized by the Land-use plan maps on lands encompassing important natural features be accomplished in a manner which conserves or enhances the resource.



The County shall utilize the following policies.

- LU-9a:** Specific plans or zonings shall not authorize commercial or industrial use or a residential density exceeding one unit per 20 acres on any land area which contains important natural or scenic features, as identified in the Open Space Element
- LU-9b:** Permit processing procedures shall require establishment of building envelopes for any authorized development on any parcel which encompasses any portion of an important natural or scenic feature; the building envelope shall be located in a manner which will conserve and protect the natural or scenic feature.
- LU-9c:** A scenic easement which 1) restricts construction within areas containing biotic resources and 2) limits future non-agricultural development to the maximum number of dwellings or lots authorized by the land-use plan map, shall be required as a condition of approval of any tentative map which subdivides land with a biotic resources designation in the Open Space Element.
- LU-9d:** The County shall encourage conveyance of voluntary conservation easements to the county, or to an appropriate non-profit entity at the discretion of the property owner, when considering development permits on any lands containing important natural or scenic features.

## **2.2 RESIDENTIAL USE POLICY**

Four residential land-use categories shall be utilized on the land-use plan maps: urban low-density residential, urban medium density residential, urban high-density residential, and rural residential. The three urban categories, which may be utilized only for those lands which are within the boundaries of an urban service area, allow densities of one to six, six to 12, and 12 to 20 units per acre respectively. The rural residential category allows densities ranging from one unit per acre to one unit per 20 acres. Specific maximum permitted densities shall be shown on the land-use plan map for parcels within the various urban and rural residential areas. Although certain other land-use categories utilized by this plan may permit limited residential use as it is ancillary or incidental to the primary uses, only the four use categories for which policies are expressed in this section shall be considered residential use categories. Additional standards applicable to the development of residential lands are expressed in the zoning and subdivision ordinances of the County of Sonoma, and in specific plans for some land areas.

### **2.2.1 Policy for Low-density Urban Residential Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of the low-density urban residential land-use category shall be to provide lands which have or are planned to have access to the full range of urban services for residential development at

densities of up to six dwellings per acre, exclusive of density bonus or secondary dwellings. Although this category shall accommodate both detached and attached dwellings (including conventional stick-build and manufactured dwellings on permanent foundations) and a variety of tenure types (fee-simple, condominium, cooperative, rental) the intent is that new development be compatible with the visual and architectural character of existing neighborhoods where land uses consist primarily of detached single-family dwellings.

**Permitted Uses:** Primary land uses which shall be permitted on lands designated within this category include detached single-family, clustered or attached dwellings. Secondary or compatible uses which are incidental to or do not significantly detract from low-density residential neighborhoods may be allowed, including secondary dwelling units, guest houses, home occupations, small-scale home care and group care facilities, small-scale religious institutions and other uses and structures incidental to primary uses.

**Permitted Residential Densities and Development Criteria:** Permitted residential density shall be one to six units per gross acre, inclusive of easements. The maximum density applicable to any parcel designated within this category shall be as indicated on the land-use plan map. Connection shall be required to a public water and/or sewerage system at the time of planning department approval of a building permit application.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for designation within the low-density urban residential category, land shall conform to the following criteria:

1. lands shall be within a designated urban service area boundary
2. water, sewerage, public safety, park, and school services shall be available or shall be planned to be available at acceptable urban levels of service within the 20-year horizon of this plan.
3. lands shall have convenient access to designated arterial or collector roads.
4. lands shall not be subject to unacceptable risks associated with noise flood, seismic, or other hazards.

## **2.2.2 Policy for Medium-density Urban Residential Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** This land-use category shall be utilized to provide certain lands, which have or are planned to have access to the full range of urban services, for residential development at densities of six to 12 dwellings per acre, exclusive of density bonus or secondary dwellings. This land-use category shall accommodate dwellings of all tenure types and may include conventional stick-built and manufactured dwellings.



**Permitted Uses:** The primary use of lands so designated shall be single-family dwellings, clustered dwellings, multi-family dwellings and mobile home parks. Secondary or compatible land uses which are incidental to and do not significantly detract from residential neighborhoods may be allowed including secondary dwelling units, guest houses, home occupations, small-scale home care and group care facilities, small-scale religious institutions, and other uses and structures incidental to primary uses.

**Permitted Residential Densities and Development Criteria:** Permitted residential densities shall be from 6 to 12 units per gross acre, inclusive of easements. The maximum density applicable to any parcel shall be as indicated on the land-use plan map. Connection shall be required to public water and/or sewerage systems at the time of planning department approval of a building permit application.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for designation within the medium-density urban residential use category, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. lands shall be within a designated urban service area boundary
2. water, sewerage, public safety, school, and park services shall be available or shall be planned to be available at acceptable urban levels of service within the 20-year time horizon of this plan.
3. lands shall have convenient access to designated arterial or collector roads.
4. lands shall have convenient access to commercial and community services.
5. lands shall not be subject to unacceptable risks associated with noise, flood, seismic, or other hazards.

### **2.2.3 Policy for High-density Urban Residential Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** This land-use category shall be utilized to provide lands, which have or are planned to have access to the full range of urban services, for residential development at densities of 12 to 20 dwellings per acre, exclusive of density bonus units or secondary dwellings. This land-use category shall accommodate residences of all tenure types and various construction methods, including conventional stick-built and manufactured dwellings.

**Permitted Uses:** Primary land uses shall be attached single-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings and mobile home parks. Secondary or compatible land uses which are incidental to and do not detract from residential neighborhoods shall be allowed, including second dwelling units, guest houses, home occupations, small-scale home care and group care facilities, small-scale religious institutions, and other uses and structures incidental to primary uses.



**Permitted Densities and Development Criteria:** Permitted residential densities shall not be less than 12 nor more than 20 units per gross acre, inclusive of easements. The maximum density applicable to any parcel shall be as indicated on the land-use plan map. Connection shall be required to public water and sewerage systems at the time of planning department approval of a building permit application. Design review approval shall be required for all multi-unit structures and for projects of four or more units.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible to be designated in the high-density urban residential use category, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. lands shall be within a designated urban service area boundary
2. water, sewerage, public safety, school, and park services shall be available or shall be planned to be available at acceptable urban levels of service within the 20-year time horizon of this plan.
3. lands shall have convenient access to designated arterial or collector roads.
4. lands shall have convenient access to commercial and community services.
5. lands shall not be subject to unacceptable risks associated with noise, flood, seismic, or other hazards.

#### **2.2.4 Policy for Rural Residential Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** This category shall be used to provide for very-low density residential development on lands which have access to county-maintained roads but which are not intended to be provided urban-level services. The intent shall be to preserve the rural character of these areas and to prohibit more-intensive types of development.

**Permitted Uses:** The primary use permitted for lands within this designation shall be detached single-family homes. Secondary uses which may be allowed where appropriate and compatible with the primary use include attached dwellings, crop production, small-scale animal husbandry, home occupations, small-scale home care and group care facilities, small-scale religious institutions and other uses incidental to the primary use.

**Permitted Densities and Development Criteria:** The range of maximum residential densities allowed on lands within this category shall be one to twenty (1-20) acres per dwelling. The land-use plan maps shall indicate a maximum permitted density for each area designated within this category. Factors to be utilized in establishing the applicable maximum density include: existing parcel sizes and dwelling densities; septic suitability of soils; water availability; environmental suitability; proximity to arterial or collector roads; proximity to commercial services and public facilities; and impacts on agriculture and resource production activities. Parcel sizes smaller than one and one-half acres shall not be permitted if the residence is to be served by individual well and septic system; parcel sizes may be as small as one acre if the residence is to be served by a public water system.

**Designation Criteria:** To be eligible to receive this designation, land areas shall meet the following criteria:

1. the average parcel size within any contiguous rural residential area shall not exceed 10 acres
2. the area shall not encompass substantial agricultural uses.
3. lands shall not have soils that are suitable for agricultural production.
4. lands shall have access to a County-maintained road, and shall be in close proximity to urban areas.
5. lands shall have a sufficient supply of groundwater for individual wells.
6. lands shall have soils, slopes and other geologic characteristics which result in adequate permeability for individual septic systems.

## **2.3 COMMERCIAL USE POLICY**

The land-use plan maps employ three categories of commercial uses: "general commercial", which permits all types of commercial use; "limited commercial", which restricts permitted uses to particular types or intensities of commercial development and "recreation and visitor-serving commercial". The intent of commercial use policies is to contain and restrict such uses to those areas and parcels that are identified as appropriate locations for commercial activities, as indicated on the land-use plan maps. The general commercial use category is restricted to lands that are located within designated urban service area boundaries. The limited commercial category may be applied to areas or parcels outside urban service areas as well as to those within such boundaries. The particular types or intensities of commercial uses that are permitted on lands designated as limited commercial are specified in the applicable portion of Section 3.0 of this element.

When applied in rural community areas, the limited commercial category frequently restricts commercial uses to those retail and service uses which are local-serving in nature; in rural locations without water and sewer services, commercial activities may be limited in scale such that they may be adequately served by a well and septic system. The recreation and visitor-serving commercial use category acknowledges the importance of the tourism industry to Sonoma County's economy and is used to designate sites which are appropriate for restaurants, lodging facilities, developed campgrounds, resorts, marinas, golf courses, and similar types of commercial services.

Additional standards appropriate to assure the proper development of commercial lands shall be expressed in the zoning and subdivision ordinances of the County of Sonoma. In some areas of the county, additional standards may be required by a specific plan.



### 2.3.1 Policy for General Commercial Areas

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of the general commercial land-use category shall be to provide sites for the development of intense commercial uses which accommodate a mix of business activities and serve the general shopping and service needs of the residential and business community as a whole rather than a local neighborhood. These uses provide for comparison shopping and services which are ordinarily obtained on an occasional rather than daily basis. Such uses may have adverse impacts on nearby areas while nevertheless providing necessary and desirable services to the larger community. Regional shopping centers are not provided for in this category and such facilities shall be located within incorporated cities.

**Permitted Uses:** All commercial uses are permissible on lands designated as general commercial. The primary uses shall include businesses found in larger shopping centers such as department stores, specialty shops, and furniture stores; "space extensive" or showroom/warehouse businesses such as paint, tire, carpet, lumber, home materials, and feed stores; and wholesale and heavy commercial uses and services such as cabinet shops, contractors shop and automobile and truck repair establishments. Residential uses shall be limited to one caretaker unit per parcel.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** Professional, administrative, financial, medical and general business offices which exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area shall require this use category. Site coverage of structures may not exceed 50 percent of the gross site area. All commercial uses shall require design review approval. General commercial uses ordinarily have an employment rate of 17 to 20 employees per gross acre; traffic generation rates vary by the specific type of use and generally range from 240 to 800 trip ends per acre per day.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for the general commercial designation, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. lands shall be located within an urban service area boundary.
2. adequate public services shall be available or shall be planned to be available during the time horizon of this plan.
3. lands shall be located on or have convenient access to roads which are designated as arterial or collector highways.
4. lands shall be adjacent to or in close proximity to other commercial uses, but shall not be allowed to occur in strips along highways.
5. lands shall not be located in environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas such as floodways, fault zones, or hillsides.



### 2.3.2 Policy for Limited Commercial Areas

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of the limited commercial category shall be to provide sites where a limited sub-set of commercial activities are permitted, rather than the entire range which is allowed in the general commercial designation. The particular sub-sets which may be permitted vary by location, as specified in statements of land-use policy for each of the nine planning areas. The size or scale of commercial activities may also be limited.

The purpose of one sub-set of limited-commercial lands is to provide a supply of land to accommodate retail sales and services which are oriented towards the needs of local rural or urban neighborhoods or communities. Its purpose is to allow each community to obtain self-sufficiency in regards to day-to-day living needs without disrupting the primary character of the area. Within rural areas, the use may consist of a single parcel and is intended to restrict the intensity of use to that level that may be adequately served by individual well and septic systems.

**Permitted Uses:** Specific limitations on the range and/or scale of commercial uses which are permitted vary by location and are expressed for each limited commercial area in the applicable portion of Section 3.0 of this Element. Residential uses shall be limited to one caretaker unit per parcel.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** Limited commercial uses ordinarily have an employment rate of 17 to 20 employees per gross acre; traffic generation rates vary from about 46 to 270 trip ends per day per 1,000 square feet of gross leasable area. The size of any new parcel shall not be smaller than 1.5 acres where development will be served by individual wells and septic systems or 1.0 acre where public water service is available. Site coverage of structures may not exceed 50 percent of the gross site area. All commercial uses shall require design review approval.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible to receive the limited commercial designation, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. lands shall be located within the boundaries of an urban service area or have demonstrated suitability for septic waste disposal and adequate groundwater supply.
2. lands shall be located on or have convenient access to a road which is designated as an arterial or collector.
3. the quantity of land designated for limited commercial shall be consistent with population growth projected for the local market area.
4. lands shall be in close proximity to other commercial uses or to population concentrations.
5. outside community areas, agglomerations of parcels with limited commercial use designations shall not be permitted.

6. lands shall not be located in environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas, such as floodways, steep or unstable slopes and fault zones.
7. lands shall not be located in scenic corridors designated by the Open Space Element, except within existing community areas.
8. any parcel or portion of a parcel so designated shall not exceed five acres in size in rural service areas or 10 acres in urban service areas.

### **2.3.3 Policy for Recreation and Visitor-serving Commercial Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of this designation shall be to provide suitable sites and protection for outdoor recreation facilities and areas and the commercial service needs of visitors and travellers. The intent is to assure that such development is limited to those areas and parcels which are appropriate to accommodate these types of uses.

**Permitted Uses:** The primary uses permitted on lands so designated shall be outdoor recreation facilities and tourist commercial uses, including golf courses, tennis and racquet clubs, marinas, race tracks, shooting ranges, and similar uses in private ownership. Other uses permitted include developed campgrounds, recreational vehicle parks, indoor lodging, indoor recreation facilities, visitor information centers, museums, restaurants, and other uses principally oriented to the needs of visitors. Residential use shall be limited to one caretaker unit per parcel.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** Traffic generation rates vary by type of use and range from less than one trip per day per acre to nearly 300 trips per acre per day. The size of any new parcels shall not be smaller than 1.5 acres where development will be served by individual wells and septic systems or 1.0 acre where public water is available. Site coverage by structures may not exceed 50 percent of the gross site area. The building intensity for lodging facilities may not exceed 50 rooms per site in rural service areas and 200 rooms in urban service areas. Design review shall be required for all development in recreation and visitor-serving commercial areas.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for designation for recreation and visitor-serving commercial use, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. lands shall be currently devoted to the permitted uses or shall be needed to accommodate projected growth in demand for travel and tourism services.
2. lands shall have convenient access to a county-maintained road; preference shall be given to lands near or on designated arterials or collectors.
3. lands shall not be located within an agricultural production area.
4. outside community areas, agglomerations of parcels with recreation and visitor-serving commercial use designations shall not be permitted.



## 2.4 INDUSTRIAL USE POLICY

The land-use plan maps employ two industrial use categories: "general industrial" and "limited industrial". These categories designate lands which are needed to provide employment opportunities and services for county residents and business firms. Their purpose is to contain and limit industrial uses to the appropriate designated areas in order to avoid potential adverse impacts on adjacent areas. The general industrial category permits all industrial uses but is restricted to lands that are within the boundaries of urban service areas. The limited industrial category limits the types or intensities of industrial uses that are permitted, but lands so designated may be outside the boundaries of urban service areas as well as within such areas. The particular limitation on the types or scale of industrial uses applicable to individual land areas is expressed in Section 3.0 of the Land-use Element.

Additional standards which are appropriate to assure the proper development of industrial lands shall be expressed in the zoning and subdivision ordinances of the County of Sonoma. In some areas of the county, further standards may be required by a specific plan.

### 2.4.1 Policy for General Industrial Use Areas

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of the "General Industrial" land-use category shall be to provide an adequate supply of land for industrial activities within those communities or other land areas where urban services are available. Its purpose is to provide employment opportunities in selected communities throughout the county and to allow a full range of industrial uses. The intent shall be to regulate locations of future industrial development so as to ensure its compatibility with the environment, supporting infrastructure, and adjacent neighborhoods and land-uses.

**Permitted Uses:** All industrial uses may be allowed. The primary use of lands designated in the "General Industrial" category shall be production or assembly of products. Typical uses include manufacturing goods, warehousing, research facilities, machine shops, contractor's storage, and processing plants. Offices which are ancillary to the primary use are allowed. Residential uses shall be limited to one caretaker unit per parcel. Secondary uses may include minor commercial services.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** General industrial uses have an employment rate of 2-27 employees per acre. The traffic generation factor typically averages 40 trip ends per acre per day. Building coverage shall not exceed 50 percent of a site area. Design review shall be required for all industrial development projects. New parcel sizes may not be smaller than 20,000 square feet.



**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for designation for general industrial use, lands shall conform to the following criteria:

1. lands shall be located within the boundary of an urban service area.
2. adequate public services shall be available or shall be planned to be available during the time horizon of this plan.
3. lands shall be located with convenient access to a road which is designated as an arterial or collector highway.
4. the quantity of land so designated shall be consistent with the projected employment within the applicable sub-county planning area.
5. lands shall not be located in hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodways, unstable slopes, or fault zones.

## **2.4.2 Policy for Limited Industrial Areas**

**Purpose and Definition** The "Limited Industrial" land-use category shall be applied to provide sites for development to meet service and employment needs of the county, but where the range or scale of appropriate industrial uses is limited either by a lack of public services or by policies intended to preclude incompatible uses or those which have noxious side effects. Industrial parks are included in this category as well as land-extensive industrial development.

**Permitted Uses:** Specific limitations on the range or intensity of industrial uses which are permitted vary by location and are expressed for each individual area in the applicable portion of Section 3.0 of this Element. Residential use shall be limited to one caretaker unit per parcel.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** Limited industrial uses ordinarily have an employment rate of 2-27 employees per acre. The traffic generation factor typically averages about 60 trip ends per day per acre. Building coverage may not exceed 50 percent of the gross site area. The sizes of newly created parcels shall not be smaller than 1.5 acres where development will be served by individual wells and septic systems or 1.0 acre where public water is available. All new industrial uses shall require design review.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible to receive the limited industrial designation, lands shall conform to the following criteria:

1. lands shall be presently used for the permitted uses or shall be necessary to accommodate the projected employment within the applicable sub-county planning area.
2. lands outside urban service areas shall have demonstrated adequacy of water and septic suitability.
3. lands shall have convenient access to a road designated as an arterial or collector.
4. lands shall be located in close proximity to population concentrations.
5. lands shall not be in environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas.
6. except for community areas, lands shall not be located in a scenic corridor designated by the Open Space Element.

## 2.5 POLICY FOR PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC LAND USES

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of this designation shall be to provide suitable sites and protection for facilities which serve the community or public needs and which are owned or operated by government agencies, non-profit entities, or public utilities.

**Permitted Uses:** All facilities and improvements owned or operated by government agencies, other non-profit entities or public utilities shall be permitted in this designation. All permitted uses must be incidental and accessory to the principal public uses. Types of facilities appropriate to this designation include schools, libraries, governmental administration centers, fire stations, cemeteries, airports, hospitals, sewage treatment plants, waste disposal sites, and similar uses. For some land areas, the land-use plan map may indicate the specific type of public use that is to be accommodated; in such instances, other public uses shall not be authorized.

**Permitted Development Intensities and Criteria:** Any applicable standards are expressed in the Public Facilities Element.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible for designation for public and quasi-public use, lands shall meet the following criteria:

1. ownership or long-term lease by a government agency, other non-profit entity or public utility.
2. lands projected to be needed for allowed uses within the 20 year period to year-2005, as indicated in the Public Facilities Element.
3. adequate road access.
4. lands shall not be suitable for resource production activities and shall not adversely affect such activities.

## 2.6 AGRICULTURAL LAND-USE POLICY

The land-use plan maps employ three agricultural use categories: "vineyards and specialty crops," "forage crops/grazing/livestock," and "diverse agriculture". Each category permits the full range of agricultural production uses. The categories differ primarily in terms of the types and intensities of agricultural services, agricultural processing facilities, and visitor-serving uses that are allowed, and in terms of permitted residential densities. All three categories establish the primacy of agricultural production uses and existing and potential non-agricultural users are apprised that they may experience potentially adverse conditions from the normal and routine agricultural practices which occur within these areas. Additional standards to assure appropriate and compatible development of lands within agricultural areas shall be expressed in the zoning and subdivision ordinances of the County of Sonoma, and in specific plans for some land areas.



### 2.6.1 Policy for Vineyard and Specialty Crop Areas

**Purpose and Definition:** The intent of this category shall be to preserve and protect lands capable of and generally used for the production of food, fiber and plant materials. The title is intended to be descriptive of the predominant land-intensive agricultural use of the land but shall not be utilized to exclude or limit other types of agricultural production. When an overlay is applied, additional compatible, agriculturally-related uses which enhance the fruit, nut and wine grape industries, including selected large-scale processing facilities and visitor services are permitted. The objective in land-intensive agricultural areas shall be to establish densities and parcel sizes which are conducive to continued agricultural production.

#### **Permitted Uses and Densities:**

**Agricultural Production:** All land-dependent and non-land dependent agricultural production and related agricultural activities and practices.

**Agricultural Processing:** Small- and intermediate-scale processing facilities for agricultural products grown on premises or in the local area, such as wineries.

**Agricultural Services:** Small-scale agricultural support services, such as equipment repair or welding, as ancillary to the agricultural use of a parcel, limited to the farm operator and not more than one employee.

**Visitor-serving uses:** Small-scale visitor-serving uses, limited to tasting rooms and stands for the sales of products grown or processed on the premises or the local area.

**Permitted Residential Densities and Parcel Sizes:** Maximum permitted densities for lands within this category shall be between 20 and 100 acres per residential unit, as designated on the land use plan maps. The least restrictive end of the range (20-40 acres) shall in general be utilized to reflect pre-existing parcelization; the mid-portion shall reflect soil types and water availability suitable to highly productive farming lands; the lowest end of the range shall reflect areas of the county where soil type and water availability require larger parcels of land for an economically feasible vineyard/orchard operation. A minimum size of 40 acres shall be required for new parcels.

Businesses providing agricultural services and community and public facilities such as schools and churches are expressly prohibited in land areas designated for vineyards and specialty crop production.



**Additional Uses permitted with Parcel-specific Overlay Designations:**

Resource-related Commercial-Industrial Overlay: large-scale processing facilities specifically related to vineyard production and specialty crops such as large wineries and canneries. Storage and bottling facilities not specifically associated with and on the same parcel as a processing facility are not permitted.

Recreation and Visitor-related Commercial Overlay: This overlay shall be used to accommodate recreation and visitor-serving commercial uses existing as of the date of adoption of this plan; the overlay shall not be applied to additional lands for the purpose of allowing new uses of this type. These existing uses include visitor-serving facilities which enhance the marketing of agricultural products. Off-road vehicle parks of any size are not considered compatible with any agricultural production use and shall be prohibited. Existing recreation and visitor-serving facilities occupying an entire parcel or as the primary use of a parcel shall require "Recreation and Visitor Commercial" as a base category. Existing uses permitted with the overlay include restaurants, "bed and breakfast" inns of five or fewer rooms, and large-scale wine-tasting/visitor centers.

**Designation Criteria:** In order for lands to be eligible for designation within the "Vineyards and Specialty Crops" category, one or more of the following characteristics is required:

1. soil and micro-climatic conditions and water supply adequate for orchard or premium wine grape production; generally, all Class I and II soils, and some Class III and IV soils are eligible.
2. predominant parcel sizes greater than 20 acres. (Note: Dry Creek Valley excluded).
3. existing or historic usage as orchards or vineyards.
4. area having a sub-county viticultural appellation.
5. Williamson Act Contract, Type I or Type II.
6. designation on State Important Farmlands Map as "Prime", "Statewide Importance," "Unique," or "Local Importance".
7. parcels or groups of parcels which may not meet the above criteria but which are surrounded by lands devoted to agricultural production.

**Other Applicable Policies:** Other policies are applicable to these land areas as expressed in the Agricultural Resources Element.

**2.6.2 Policy for Forage Crop/Grazing/Livestock Production Areas**

**Definition and Purpose:** The purpose of this category shall be to preserve and protect lands capable of and generally used for the production of food, fiber and plant materials. The title "Forage Crop/Grazing/Livestock Production" is intended to be descriptive of the predominant land-extensive agricultural uses

of an area but shall not be utilized to exclude or limit other types of agricultural production. When an overlay is applied, the category permits compatible agriculturally-related uses including selected large-scale processing facilities, agricultural services, and visitor services. The objective in land-extensive agricultural areas shall be to establish and maintain densities and parcel sizes which are conducive to continued agricultural production. This use category is intended to be applied to dairy production areas.

**Permitted Uses and Densities:** The following uses and densities shall be authorized:

Agricultural Production: All land-dependent and non-land dependent agricultural production and related agricultural activities and practices.

Agricultural Processing: small-scale and intermediate-scale facilities for processing of agricultural products produced in the area or county, such as creameries.

Agricultural Services: small-scale agricultural support services, such as equipment repair or welding, as ancillary to the agricultural use of a parcel.

Recreation and Visitor-related Services: small-scale visitor serving uses including small tasting rooms, stands for the sales of products grown or processed in the county, and "bed and breakfast" inns of 5 or fewer rooms.

Permitted Densities and Parcel Sizes: Maximum permitted residential densities shall range from 60 to 160 acres per unit, with the specific maximum density as designated on the land-use plan maps for particular land areas or parcels. The greatest densities shall in general only be utilized to reflect pre-existing parcel patterns; the middle ranges are more indicative of the southeastern portion of the county where soil and water availability make  $\pm$  100 acre parcels economically feasible; and the lowest or most restrictive end of the range is associated with the southern and northwestern parts of the county. In considering subdivision of these lands, one-half of the parcels permitted by the applicable residential density, or three of the permitted residential building sites (whichever is greater), shall be allowed to be clustered on parcels as small as one and one-half acres but no larger than ten acres; the remaining lots permitted by the applicable residential density shall be 40 acres or larger.

Community and public-service facilities such as schools and churches are specifically excluded from lands within this category.



**Additional Uses Permitted with Parcel-specific Overlay Designations:** The following additional uses may be permitted with the appropriate overlay designation.

Resource-related Commercial-Industrial Overlay: large-scale processing facilities specifically related to dairy and livestock production, such as rendering plants and large-scale creameries are permitted; agricultural services such as large-animal veterinary clinics, auction yards, and feed mills may be allowed.

Recreation and Visitor-Related Commercial Overlay: Guest ranches, lodgings or improved campgrounds -- up to a maximum of 15 rooms/sites -- and other visitor-serving facilities specifically related to the dairy, livestock or forage crop industries. Off-road vehicle parks of any size are not considered compatible with any agricultural production use and therefore shall be prohibited. Recreation and visitor-serving commercial facilities occupying an entire parcel or as the primary use of a parcel shall require the appropriate base category.

**Designation Criteria:** In order for lands to be eligible for designation within the "Forage Crop/Grazing/Livestock Production" category one or more of the following characteristics is required:

1. predominant parcel sizes of 60 acres or larger.
2. existing or historic usage of land for livestock grazing, dairy ranching, hay or other similar crop production.
3. contiguous parcels of similar usage within a 100 acre area.
4. Williamson Act Contract (Type 1 or Type 2).
5. designation on the state "Important Farmlands Map" as "Grazing Land" and "Local Importance".

**Other Policies:** Other policies apply to these land areas as expressed in the Agricultural Resources Element.

### **2.6.3 Policy for Diverse Agricultural Production Areas**

**Definition and Purpose:** The purpose of this category shall be to protect and conserve those land areas of the county where soil type, climatic conditions and water availability permit productive agricultural use of the land, but where parcelization patterns or other factors tend to result in small-acreage intensive farming and part-time farming activities. Such agricultural activities may be undertaken to supplement income from other sources and may not constitute the principal occupation of many of these farm operators. The priority for lands designated within this category shall be to preserve and protect lands for continued agricultural use and to limit any further residential intrusion.



**Permitted Uses and Densities:** The following uses and residential densities are permitted on lands designated for Diverse Agriculture:

Agricultural Production: All land-dependent and non-land dependent agricultural production shall be permitted.

Agricultural Processing: Small- and intermediate-scale processing of agricultural commodities grown on the premises or in the immediate area.

Agricultural Services: Small-scale agricultural services directly related to agricultural uses when incidental to the primary agricultural use of a parcel and not exceeding one employee.

Visitor Related Services: Small-scale visitor-serving uses including small tasting rooms, stands for the sales of products grown or processed on premises, or in the area, and "bed and breakfast" inns of five or fewer rooms.

Permitted Densities and Parcel Sizes: Maximum permitted densities for lands within this category shall be between 10 and 60 acres per residential unit as designated on the land-use plan map. In general, densities near the high end of the range shall only be used to reflect existing parcelization patterns or to provide a transition between major agricultural use areas and rural residential or urban uses. The size of any new parcel shall not be smaller than ten (10) acres.

Community and public-service facilities such as schools and churches are expressly excluded from land areas designated for diverse agriculture.

**Additional Uses Permitted with Applicable Overlay Designations:** The following uses are permitted with the appropriate parcel-specific overlay designation.

Resource-related Commercial-Industrial Overlay: All uses allowed with the same overlay in both the Vineyards/Specialty Crop category and the Forage Crop/Dairy/Livestock category.

Recreation and Visitor-Commercial Overlay: All uses allowed with the same overlay in both the Vineyards/Specialty Crop category and the Forage Crop/Dairy Livestock category.

Before an overlay designation may be approved for a parcel located in a Diverse Agriculture area, findings must be made that a proposed use and its location conform to specific criteria as expressed in the Agricultural Resources Element.

**Designation Criteria:** In order to be eligible to receive this designation, lands shall have one or more of the following characteristics:

1. an existing pattern of small parcels, often several of which are held in joint ownership, or a mixture of small and large parcels.
2. soil types suitable to crop production and adequate water availability for necessary irrigation.
3. historic and existing usage for agricultural production, including hobby and part-time farms.
4. Williamson Act contract, Type 1 or Type 2.
5. designation on the State of California's "Important Farmlands Map" as "Prime", "Statewide Importance", "Unique", "Local Importance", or "Grazing Lands".

**Other Policies:** Other policies apply to these land areas, as specified in the Agricultural Resources Element.

## **2.7 NATURAL RESOURCE LAND-USE POLICY**

Three natural resource land-use categories are employed on the land-use plan maps: timberlands, geothermal and mineral resources, and natural resource conservation. With the exception of the latter category, which may permit residential densities as great as one unit per 20 acres, residential uses are discouraged and are not permitted at densities greater than one unit per 160 acres. The intent in all three categories is that natural resource areas be managed and conserved and that production activities be undertaken in a manner which avoids depletion and promotes replenishment of renewable resources.

### **2.7.1 Policy for Timberland Areas**

**Definition and Purpose:** The purpose of the timberlands category shall be to protect and conserve those lands on which commercial timber production is the primary or most suitable land-use. In general, timberlands are areas of dominantly conifer growth, primarily coast redwood and/or Douglas fir. It is the county's intent that public services not be extensively provided in timberland areas and that increases in roadway capacities not be approved. All uses and development shall be designed and constructed in a manner which has a minimum adverse affect on the physical and biological environment.

**Permitted Uses:** The primary use of lands so designated shall be timber management activities, including planting, growing, harvesting and processing of timber. Secondary or compatible uses which are incidental to and do not significantly detract from the use of the property for, or inhibit, growing and harvesting timber, shall be allowed, including: aquaculture, hunting and fishing, grazing, recreation and educational uses not requiring any permanent structures, and residential use -- limited to one single-family dwelling per parcel.



**Permitted Residential Densities and Development Criteria:** Maximum permitted residential densities for lands designated as Timberlands shall range from 160 acres to 320 or more acres per dwelling unit as shown on the land-use plan maps. In general, the higher densities shall be allowed in areas with better access and less severe physical constraints. The minimum parcel size permitted for new parcels shall be 160 acres. Any new residential building sites shall be located with access to existing county-maintained roads.

**Designation Criteria:** Lands eligible for designation within the Timberlands category shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. lands zoned Timber Production Zones (TPZ) pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act (Government Code Chapter 6.7);
2. lands with woodland soils, as defined in the Sonoma County Soil Survey;
3. parcels of at least 40 acres in area, unless largely or completely surrounded by other parcels classified as timberlands.

## **2.7.2 Policy for Geothermal and Mineral Resource Areas**

**Definition and Purpose:** The purpose of the "Geothermal and Mineral Resources" category shall be to designate and protect those lands with known geothermal resource potential or commercial minerals. The classification may be used as a "base" category or as an overlay category. In general, geothermal resource lands shall be designated by the base category and shall be limited to lands contained within a Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) identified by the California Division of Mines and Geology. Mineral resource lands shall be designated by the overlay and consist primarily of sites for extraction of aggregates from river beds and hard-rock quarry sites. Public services, except for access roads to geothermal power plants, shall not be extensively provided.

**Permitted Uses and Densities as a Base Category:** The primary use of lands so designated shall be geothermal management and production activities. Permitted uses include geothermal resource exploration activities, geothermal power generation facilities, and related transmission facilities. Secondary or compatible uses which are incidental to and do not significantly detract from the use of the property for the primary uses shall be allowed including: livestock farming and grazing, timber or fuelwood harvesting, recreational and educational uses not requiring any permanent improvements, aquaculture, and one single-family dwelling per parcel. Residential uses shall be discouraged on lands designated for geothermal uses; the maximum permitted residential densities within these areas shall be one dwelling unit per 320 acres.

**Permitted Uses, Standards and Densities as an Overlay:** The primary purpose of the overlay shall be to reserve lands for mineral resource conservation, management, extraction, or processing. Prior to approval of any use permit for mineral resource extraction, the primary permitted uses shall be defined by the applicable base use category. Permissible base categories with which



the overlay may be used include natural resource conservation, timberland, and the three agricultural use classifications. Upon termination of extraction activities, reclamation shall be to a standard which is appropriate to allow the uses permitted by the base use category.

**Designation Criteria:** The Geothermal and Mineral Resource category may be applied to lands which meet one of the following criteria:

1. identified as part of a Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) by California Division of Mines;
2. identified as a site of aggregate or hard-rock mineral extraction in the Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan.

### **2.7.3 Policy for Natural Resource Conservation Areas**

**Purpose and Definition:** The purpose of the Natural Resource Conservation category shall be to designate those lands on which the primary and most suitable land-use is the conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources, including (but not limited to) watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, and unique and sensitive biotic areas and landforms. Most of the lands so designated possess physical constraints, such as geologic hazards, steep slopes, poor soils, poor access, and a lack of public services, which preclude or greatly inhibit more intensive residential use or other types of development. It is the County's intent that additional public services not be extensively provided in natural resource conservation areas and that any uses and development be accomplished in a manner so as to have the minimum feasible adverse impact on the physical and biological environment.

**Permitted Uses and Densities:** The primary use of lands in the Natural Resource Conservation category shall be resource management and enhancement. Secondary or compatible uses which are incidental to and do not significantly detract from the use of the property for the primary use shall be allowed, including: wildlife preserves and refuges; livestock farming; planting, raising, and harvesting of trees for lumber or fuel; recreational and educational uses not requiring any permanent improvements; outdoor growing and harvesting of plants, and food and fiber crops; and residential uses, limited to one single-family dwelling per parcel.

Maximum permitted residential densities applicable to lands designated as Natural Resource Conservation areas shall range from 20 to 320 or more acres per dwelling unit, as shown on the land-use plan maps. In general, the higher densities shall be allowed in areas with less severe constraints and/or greater accessibility. Densities within the 20-60 acre range shall be primarily utilized to acknowledge parcelization existing as of 1986. The minimum parcel size for any new parcel shall be 20 acres, unless clustering is utilized and a protective easement is conveyed to the County on the large-parcel residual.

**Additional Uses Permitted With Applicable Overlay Designations:** The following additional uses may be permitted with the appropriate overlay designation:

Resource-related Commercial-industrial Overlay: large-scale processing facilities related to resource production, such as sawmills, which are dependent upon proximity to the resource site; ancillary uses such as equipment storage yards and materials storage yards.

Recreation and Visitor-serving commercial Overlay: lodgings and improved campgrounds related to and requiring close proximity to scenic resource areas or to major recreation-travel routes, restaurants, tennis and aquatic clubs and facilities, golf courses, and other out-door commercial recreation activities. Any uses of this type shall not be the exclusive or predominant use of a parcel but shall be ancillary or subordinate to onsite natural or scenic resources.

**Designation Criteria:** Lands eligible for designation within the Natural Resource Conservation category shall possess one or more of the following characteristics:

1. high geologic hazard, including the potential for fault rupture or landslide
2. areas with slopes greater than 30 percent;
3. class VII and all class VIII soils, as defined in Sonoma County Soil Survey;
4. rating of "very high", "high", or "moderate" on California Division of Forestry fire hazard map;
5. marginal or unproven water availability;
6. environmental sensitivity or uniqueness;
7. lands encompassing scenic resources.

Factors for determining the applicable residential density for particular land areas include existing parcelization as of 1986, accessibility, sensitivity to adverse impacts from human activities, and the extent and severity of any physical constraints.



### **3.1 SONOMA COAST / GUALALA BASIN**

#### **3.1.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin planning area encompasses the county's entire 45-mile-long Pacific Coast margin and extends inland to include the communities of Annapolis in the north, and Bodega, Freestone, and Occidental in the south. Roughly paralleling the San Andreas Fault Zone, the rugged Sonoma Coast is a scenic area of regional, state, and national significance. Dominant landforms include nearly vertical sea cliffs and sea stacks along the shoreline, dunes, marine terraces, headlands and coastal uplands. In the north, the Gualala River extends inland through the coniferous forests of the western Mendocino Highlands, an area containing the county's most significant timber stands. In the south, Bodega Harbor and marshes where Salmon Creek and the Estero Americano enter the Pacific contribute to the variety of the coastal landscape.

Reflective of its relative remoteness and inaccessibility and the extent of environmental constraints, the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin is the most sparsely populated of the nine planning regions. With no incorporated places and a population of just over 5,400 in 1980, residents are concentrated in a number of small villages, including Bodega Bay -- the largest -- and Annapolis, Cazadero, Jenner, Camp Meeker, Occidental, Freestone and Bodega. Outside of the small communities, rural settlement is very sparse, especially north of the Russian River. The region's economy and the lifestyles of its residents are oriented primarily to recreation and tourism, commercial fishing, and sheep ranching. Several large-scale residential developments originally planned as second-home communities -- notably Sea Ranch and Bodega Harbour -- have been occupied increasingly by year-round residents in recent years. This conversion and the overall high rate of growth are evident in the fact that one out of every three residents as of 1980 resided outside Sonoma County five years earlier.

#### **3.1.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Projected population, households, and housing units for years 1990, 2000 and 2005 are shown in Table LU-5; the land-use plan for the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region is designed to accommodate the amount of growth projected over the 25-year period from 1980 to year-2005. Projected changes in levels of employment by major industry group are presented in Table LU-6 for year-2005; employment projections are by place of work. Over the 25-year period from 1980 to 2005, population is projected to increase by 57 percent to 8,500, a gain of just over 3,000 persons. Employment is projected to expand by over 100 percent to a workforce of 2,780 by year-2005, with the greatest gains in the service and retail sectors which are associated with the recreation and tourism industries. The Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region is projected to continue having the lowest average population density and smallest average household size of the nine sub-county planning areas. The average household



TABLE LU-5

Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>						
Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin	5,412	6,500	8,000	8,500	1,090	3,090
<b>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</b>						
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	5,412	6,500	8,000	8,500	1,090	3,090
Communities	2,430	3,200	3,930	4,290	770	1,860
With Sewer Service						
Bodega Bay	750	1,190	1,630	1,850	440	1,100
Occidental	130	130	130	130	0	0
Sea Ranch	600	880	1,080	1,200	280	600
Other Communities						
Bodega	30	50	60	60	20	30
Camp Meeker	600	630	650	650	30	50
Cazadero	170	170	200	220	0	50
Freestone	50	50	80	80	0	30
Jenner	100	100	100	100	0	0
Other Unincorporated	2,982	3,300	4,070	4,210	320	1,230
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
Population in Households	5,228	6,300	7,760	8,250	1,070	3,020
Average Household Size	2.34	2.28	2.27	2.25	-0.06	-0.09
Total Households	2,210	2,760	3,430	3,670	550	1,460
<b>HOUSING UNITS</b>						
Year-round	2,286	2,830	3,500	3,740	550	1,458
Seasonal / Occasional Use	1,369	1,520	2,000	2,350	+150	980
Total Housing Units	3,655	4,340	5,500	6,100	685	2,445

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

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size is expected to decrease from 2.34 persons per household in 1980 to 2.25 by year-2005. While the number of households is expected to reach 3,670 by the end of the planning period, an increase of 1,460, the number of housing units is projected to exceed households by a sizable margin due to the presence of over 2,300 dwellings which would be held for occasional use.

The land-use plan map for the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region is presented in Figure LU-6a; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-7.

### 3.1.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### **ISSUE #1: Location, Types, Intensities and Amount of Commercial/Industrial Uses**

Commercial uses in the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region historically have been small-scale and located in community areas and a limited number of scattered locations along major roadways. In this planning area, an important distinction is made between local community-serving commercial uses and those that are oriented primarily towards serving the needs of tourists and visitors. The most accessible locations for local-serving commercial uses are usually in the several small communities. As tourism has expanded in some communities, concerns have been expressed about a potential imbalance between local- and tourist-oriented commercial activities and the amounts of land available for these uses. Outside of several community areas, visitor-serving uses such as lodgings are dispersed in location and frequently sited near scenic coastal resources. Although the California Coastal Act of 1976 and the Sonoma County Coastal Plan emphasize the importance of recreation and visitor-serving facilities, there are concerns that the amount, intensity and locations of these uses be compatible with protection of the rugged, undeveloped scenic qualities of the coast. Issues also extend to the appropriate types and location for industrial uses, in particular whether they should be limited to resource-related industries -- specifically the fishing industry around Bodega Bay and the lumber industry in the Annapolis area.

**Objective LU-10.1:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan designate a sufficient amount of land for local-serving commercial uses to adequately serve the needs of the projected population.

**Objective LU-10.2:** It is the County's objective that Bodega Bay comprise the major retail and service center for the Coast and that opportunities for new commercial activities in other areas be limited in amount and intensity to reflect the character and size of their local residential communities.

**Objective LU-10.3:** It is the County's objective that any new local-serving commercial uses occur only on centrally located sites in selected community areas where they would be most accessible to the local population; these selected communities are Bodega Bay, Bodega, Occidental, Cazadero, The Sea Ranch, Annapolis, Duncan's Mills, Jenner, Stewarts Point, and Camp Meeker.

TABLE LU-6:

Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	110	100	100	110	-10	0
Centralized Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Decentralized Manufacturing	110	120	140	150	10	40
Transportation / Utilities	40	50	70	80	10	40
Retail and Wholesale Trade	380	540	740	820	160	440
Construction	50	70	80	90	20	40
Services	440	630	880	960	190	520
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	90	140	210	230	50	140
Government	160	230	310	300	70	140
Total	1,370	1,870	2,520	2,780	500	1,410
Basic	260	280	300	330	20	70
Population-Serving	1,110	1,590	2,230	2,450	480	1,340

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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**Objective LU-10.4:** It is the County's objective that any new visitor- and tourist-oriented development be limited in scale and confined primarily to the existing communities and several other specifically designated locations along the coast in order to be compatible with and protect the area's natural, undeveloped scenic character; such uses shall be prohibited along roads between the Coast and Warm Springs Dam.

**Objective LU-10.5:** It is the County's objective that any new industrial development in this planning area be limited to resource-related uses, specifically to the fishing industry in Bodega Bay and to the lumber industry in Annapolis and Cazadero.

### **ISSUE #2: Location and Intensity of Future Residential Development**

Most of the existing residential units are located in communities, with the remote and highly constrained central and northern portions of the region being very sparsely populated. The amount and type of additional residential growth which should be permitted to occur in this planning area and where it should be focused are issues.

**Objective LU-10.6:** It is the County's objective that the greatest share of new housing in the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin be constructed within the existing community areas with sewer and water services, principally Bodega Bay, and that any residential development elsewhere be ancillary to resource-related uses and at very low densities.

**Objective LU-10.7:** It is the County's objective that future residential and commercial development in Bodega Bay be balanced in a manner wherein housing opportunities are available in proportion to existing and projected employment and with a mix of price and rent levels.

**Objective LU-10.8:** It is the County's objective that any additional second-home development be limited to construction on lots within existing approved subdivisions, that services be available on the same basis as for year-round housing, and that new large-scale, second-home subdivisions not be authorized.

### **ISSUE#3: Extent of Urban Service Boundaries**

The communities in the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region range from those with full development services (Bodega Bay, Occidental and Sea Ranch) to those with none (Annapolis). Places such as Timber Cove, Jenner, Rancho del Paradiso, Bridgehaven, Pacific View, West Beach, Sereno del Mar, Carmet, Salmon Creek, Valley Ford and along Austin Creek have mutual water systems which are marginally adequate to serve the needs of existing development as of 1986. Issues include the availability of adequate water supplies to meet the needs of existing and approved future development in some areas, and the establishment of compact boundaries for urban service areas so as to maintain community identity and prevent "sprawl."

TABLE LU-7:  
Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas			Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
	Bodega Bay	Occidental	Sea Ranch *		
RESIDENTIAL					
No. of existing parcels (1985)	1,021	60	853	5,880	7,814
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	541	0	0	247	789
Total potential parcels (DUs)	1,563	60	853	6,127	8,603
Potential Population	3,517	135	1,919	13,787	19,358
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.53	0.96	0.63	0.39	0.44
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	90%	4%	60%	159%	128%
COMMERCIAL					
No. of Parcels	39	32	13	19	103
Acreage	41.5	+ 5	85	258	389.5
INDUSTRIAL					
No. of Parcels	14	---	---	14	14
Acreage	21			21	21
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS					
Resource-related					
No. of Parcels	---	---	---	1	1
Acreage				15 Ac.	15 Ac.
Recreation or Visitor Serving					
No. of Parcels	---	---	---		
Acreage					

\* Includes only the urban service area portion of the Sea Ranch development  
Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
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**Objective LU-10.9:** It is the County's objective that urban services such as water and sewer not be extended beyond the boundaries existing in 1986 for such systems, as indicated on the land-use plan map; the land areas encompassed by these boundaries are adequate to accommodate the projected amounts of growth through year-2005.

**ISSUE #4    Phasing of Development at Bodega Bay**

The greatest share of new residential development is allocated to communities where a full range of public services can be provided, and specifically to Bodega Bay. An additional 500-600 new parcels or residential units may be created in this community within the planning period. However the present alignment of Highway 1 through this area is a major development constraint due to traffic congestion. The Coastal Plan addresses this issue by phasing future residential development in Bodega Bay based on construction of a Highway 1 by-pass.

**Objective LU-10.10:** It is the County's objective that buildout of the community of Bodega Bay be phased in accordance with improvements to Highway 1, specifically construction of a by-pass of the core town area. Coastal Plan Phase I and II land-use maps for Bodega Bay depict the types and extent of phase 1 and 2 development allowed.

**ISSUE #5:    Management and Conservation of Natural Resources**

The Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region encompasses lands with agricultural production, commercial fishery resources, timber, sensitive landforms and watersheds, and scenic resources. Issues include measures to maintain parcel sizes sufficiently large to maintain grazing/livestock production units; determination of the appropriate amounts and locations of lands for commercial/industrial facilities which serve the fishing industry; measures which will conserve and guide the managed production of renewable resources such as timber; and determination of the appropriate balance between provision of public access and development and preservation of the quality of natural areas and scenic resources.

**Objective LU-10.11:** It is the County's objective that commercial and industrial uses and residential densities greater than 160 acres per unit not be authorized on lands which encompass significant natural resources, including sensitive land forms, timberlands, agricultural production areas, and lands with important scenic value.

**Objective LU-10.12:** Where the land-use plan map allows some development on lands with less-significant natural resources, it is the County's objective that development occur in a manner which is compatible with maintenance of the quality of the resource.



### 3.1.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE SONOMA COAST / GUALALA BASIN REGION

The County shall employ the following policies for new commercial development within the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin:

**LU-10a:** The "general commercial" use designation shall be limited to lands within the Bodega Bay urban service boundary; seven acres is an adequate amount of land for this purpose and shall be located as shown on the land-use plan map.

**LU-10b:** The "limited commercial" use designation shall be utilized for existing and any new local community-serving commercial uses authorized in the following communities: Annapolis, Bodega, Bodega Bay, Cazadero, Occidental, and Sea Ranch. The land use plan map designates a quantity of land for this purpose which is sufficient to meet the needs of each local area to year 2005. The following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of a quasi-judicial discretionary development permit, including subdivisions and use permits, for any proposed commercial use on these lands:

1. The proposed use will primarily serve the local community rather than tourists or travelers.
2. The proposed use will be of a size, scale, and intensity which is appropriate for and compatible with the character of the local community.
3. Public service capacities available are adequate to accommodate the proposed use and the level of service will not be adversely affected.
4. The design of the proposed use is in harmony with the natural and scenic qualities of the local area and gives the natural landscape priority over man-made features.

**LU-10c:** Proposals to add additional lands for "limited commercial" development within the communities of Annapolis, Bodega, Bodega Bay, Cazadero, Occidental or Sea Ranch shall not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:

1. No lands designated for "limited commercial" development are vacant, or the supply of vacant land designated for such uses is insufficient to meet commercial needs due to the projected growth of the local community.
2. Service capacities, including water and sewer systems and roads, are adequate to accommodate the additional development without substantially affecting the level of service received by other users.
3. Approvals of any discretionary permits on such lands shall require adoption of those findings expressed in Policy LU-10b.

**LU-10d:** The application of the "limited commercial" designation to lands outside the communities, with the exception of two acres at Stewart's Point and four acres at Annapolis (including about two acres at the Hollow Tree Store and two vacant acres across from it on Annapolis Road) shall be limited to uses that were pre-existing as of 1986; these pre-existing uses outside the communities shall not be authorized to expand or intensify beyond the level existing in 1986.

**LU-10e:** The "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" designation shall be required for any use within the communities that is primarily oriented towards providing for the needs of travelers and tourists; the following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of a quasi-judicial discretionary permit, such as a subdivision or use permit, for any proposed use on these lands:

1. The proposed use will primarily serve the needs of tourists and visitors, rather than the local community.
2. The proposed use will be of a size, scale, and intensity which is appropriate for and compatible with the character of the local community.
3. Service capacities available are adequate to accommodate the proposed use and the level of service will not be adversely affected.
4. The design of the proposed use is in harmony with the natural and scenic qualities of the local area, and acknowledges that the natural landscape takes precedence over man-made features.

**LU-10f:** Outside the communities, the "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" designation shall be limited to existing uses as of 1986 which encompassed the entirety of a parcel or which included lodgings with more than 15 rooms; other existing uses and any new uses authorized by the land-use plan map shall utilize the "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" overlay and shall not include lodging facilities of more than 15 rooms.

**LU-10g:** Industrial use categories shall be limited to lands located within the Bodega Bay urban service boundary and shall be restricted to those uses that support the commercial fishing industry, including storage and processing facilities.

**LU-10h:** Industrial uses related to the commercial fishing industry and which do not require urban services may be authorized on a parcel-specific basis by applying the resource-related commercial-industrial overlay category; such sites shall be limited to those proximate to Bodega Bay.

The following policies are be applicable to residential development within the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin area:

- LU-10i:** The urban residential use categories shall not be applied to any lands outside the urban service boundaries of Bodega Bay and Occidental. Residential lands in other communities shall not be authorized densities greater than one unit per acre.
- LU-10j:** It is the County's policy to encourage construction of new housing for low- and moderate-income households within Bodega Bay; the appropriate sites include those lands designated as "housing opportunity areas" by the Coastal Plan.
- LU-10k:** It is the County's policy that residential buildout of Bodega Bay be phased in accordance to the construction of the proposed Highway 1 by-pass, as expressed in the Coastal Plan.
- LU-10l:** Any additional second-home development shall be limited to build-out of subdivisions already approved for this purpose; no additional lands or subdivisions shall be approved for this type of residential development.
- LU-10m:** In certain existing communities, constraints of waste disposal, water availability, flood or geologic hazards may preclude creation of new lots. Densities for these areas shall be assigned to reflect existing parcelization without creation of additional lots. However, some existing parcels may be unable to develop due to health and safety factors. This situation is typical of Camp Meeker, Timber Cove, Jenner, Bridgehaven, Rancho del Paradiso, Pacific View, West Beach, Sereno Del Mar, Carmet, Salmon Creek, Valley Ford, and communities along Austin Creek.

The following policies shall be employed in areas designated for resource production and/or conservation:

- LU-10n:** Within that portion of the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin region subject to the California Coastal Act and covered by the Coastal Plan, a 640-acre minimum size shall be required for any new parcels created on lands designated "Grazing, Forage Crops, and Livestock," as shown on the land-use plan map; a general plan amendment shall be required in order to change either the density or the minimum parcel size.
- LU-10o:** All lands zoned in the "timber preserve" district and receiving tax benefits pursuant to Chapter 6.7 of the Government code of the State of California shall be designated within the "Timberland" use category; minimum sizes for any new parcels shall reflect the requirements of state law.



**LU-10p:** Although certain "recreation and visitor-serving" and "resource-related commercial-industrial" uses may be permitted by approval of the appropriate overlay designation on the land-use plan map, it is the County policy that such uses not occur within close proximity to one another. Those overlays and discretionary development permits shall be approved only if they conform to the following criteria:

1. The additional uses authorized will not result in an excessive concentration of such uses within a local area which could result in degradation of the resource.
2. The type, scale and intensity of use authorized is compatible with maintaining the natural, undeveloped character of the area and resource lands.
3. The uses can be accommodated by existing public facilities and services and will not result in an unacceptable level of service for other users.

**LU-10q:** The need for facilities directly related to and supportive of the fishing industry in Bodega Bay that cannot be accommodated within the existing community or on agricultural lands adjacent thereto because of a need for urban services, may be accommodated by expansion of the urban boundary to lands directly contiguous thereto. Any such amendment to an urban category shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The proposed use is necessary to and supportive of the fishing industry;
2. There are no parcels of sufficient size or appropriate for the proposed development available within the existing urban service area.
3. The proposed use can be served by existing or planned public facilities and services.

**LU-10r:** In the event of any future limitation on new development in Bodega Bay due to inadequate water supplies, priorities for allocation of the available supply shall be in the following order: 1) low- and moderate-income housing developments, 2) uses supporting the fishing industry, 3) local-serving commercial uses, and 4) recreation and visitor-serving uses.



## **3.2 CLOVERDALE / NORTHEAST COUNTY**

### **3.2.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Cloverdale/Northeast County region covers about 193,700 acres located in the northeastern section of the county and includes the city of Cloverdale and the community of Geyserville. This region's landforms encompass portions of the rugged Mendocino Highlands on the west and the Mayacmas Mountains on the east. The fertile Russian River Valley lies between and is rich in agricultural resources. Development of geothermal steam resources at the Geysers provides a source of electrical power while the Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys are known world wide for the quality of the wines produced from their vineyards. Lake Sonoma, an impoundment created by Warm Springs Dam on Dry Creek, and the Russian River provide recreational opportunities as well as water supply sources for domestic and agricultural use. These streambeds also are a source of aggregates, which have been extracted for use by the construction industry.

While 8,980 people resided within the boundaries of the planning area in 1980, lands outside of the valley floors are both environmentally constrained and relatively inaccessible and remained sparsely populated. Cloverdale had 3,989 residents in 1980, 44 percent of the region's total population. Agriculture, geothermal development, and manufacturing are the primary sources of employment

### **3.2.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

From 1980 to 2005, population of the Cloverdale/Northeast County region is projected to increase by 54 percent to 13,800, a gain of 4,820 residents. Of this growth, 87 percent is projected to occur within the city of Cloverdale, while the unincorporated county is expected to add only about 1,400 residents. The average household size of 2.62 persons as of 1980 is projected to decrease to 2.46 by the year 2005, as shown in Table LU-8. Employment is projected to expand by 50 percent to a total of about 5,700 by the year 2005. Major growth is expected in the retail and service sectors due to population growth and the expansion of the tourist industry, as indicated in Table LU-9.

The land-use plan map for the Cloverdale/N.E. County region is presented in Figure LU-6b; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-10.

### **3.2.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **ISSUE #1: Preservation of Agriculture**

Alexander Valley, Dry Creek Valley, Oat Valley and portions of Knights Valley contain some of the most productive farmlands in the state and are especially well suited for growing premium wine grapes. These areas may increasingly experience development pressure for rural residential and tourist commercial uses due to their scenic value, relative lack of environmental constraints and proximity to urban areas.



TABLE LU-8

Cloverdale / N.E. County: Selected Sociodemographic Data, 1980 to 2005

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>						
Cloverdale/Northeast County	8,980	10,500	12,500	13,800	1,520	4,820
<b>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</b>						
Cloverdale (City)	3,989	5,300	7,100	8,200	1,310	4,210
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	4,991	5,200	5,400	5,600	210	610
City Expansion Areas	1,520	1,320	920	720	-200	-800
Communities						
With Sewer Service						
Geyserville	450	520	600	600	70	150
Other Unincorporated	3,021	3,360	3,880	4,280	340	1,260
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
Population in Households	8,862	10,360	12,350	13,630	1,500	4,770
Average Household Size	2.62	2.53	2.49	2.46	-0.09	-0.16
Total Households	3,339	4,100	4,960	5,540	760	2,200
<b>HOUSING UNITS</b>						
Year-round	3,389	4,150	5,010	5,590	760	2,200
Seasonal / Occasional Use	171	180	190	195	10	25
Total Housing Units	3,560	4,350	5,200	5,790	770	2,230

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.

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**Objective LU-11.1:** It is the County's objective that agricultural lands in Dry Creek, Alexander, Oat and Knights Valleys remain in agricultural production.

**Objective LU-11.2:** It is the County's objective that new uses which may not be compatible with agricultural activities not be authorized on or near lands designated in the "vineyards and specialty crops" use category in Dry Creek Valley, Alexander Valley, Oat Valley and Knight's Valley; recreation and visitor-serving commercial uses are among those that shall be excluded from these areas.

## **ISSUE #2: Commercial and Industrial Land-Uses**

Commercial and industrial uses are primarily located within the city of Cloverdale and the community of Geyserville but several existing uses as of 1986 were located on parcels in the Lytton Station Road area, Dry Creek Valley and in Jim Town. While sufficient lands have been designated to meet the needs associated with projected population growth, the expansion of tourism related to the wine industry and Warm Springs Dam will create pressure for additional recreation and visitor-serving commercial land-use designations. Several parcels along Lytton Station Road have been designated for commercial use, but these lack services and are located in a visually sensitive area. Issues include concerns about the compatibility of commercial uses with agricultural production activities and with the scenic quality of the area.

**Objective LU-11.3:** It is the County's objective that development of new commercial uses be accommodated primarily in the City of Cloverdale and secondarily within the urban service boundary of the community of Geyserville; sufficient amounts of land are available for development of local-serving commercial uses in these areas.

**Objective LU-11.4:** It is the County's objective that new local-serving commercial uses not occur in rural portions of the Cloverdale/Northeast County region and that any new recreation and visitor-serving commercial uses be limited to several specific designated locations at Lake Sonoma and near Highway 101.

**Objective LU-11.5:** It is the County's intent that the design, scale, and intensity of any local- or visitor-serving development authorized by the land-use plan map be compatible with the character of the local area and with preservation of agricultural and scenic resources.

## **ISSUE #3: Urban Service Boundaries and Urban Expansion Areas**

The sphere of influence for Cloverdale as of 1986 included large industrial parcels which are authorized industrial development but currently lack urban services such as water and sewerage systems. In addition, commercial and

TABLE LU-9

Cloverdale / N.E. County: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	990	920	870	950	-70	-40
Centralized Manufacturing	280	310	330	360	30	80
Decentralized Manufacturing	840	990	1,080	1,190	150	350
Transportation / Utilities	160	330	360	390	170	240
Retail and Wholesale Trade	650	890	1,130	1,240	240	590
Construction	70	110	110	120	50	50
Services	420	550	770	840	130	420
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	140	210	310	330	70	200
Government	310	390	280	310	80	0
Total	3,840	4,680	5,240	5,730	840	1,890
Basic	2,280	2,590	2,700	2,960	300	670
Population-Serving	1,550	2,090	2,530	2,770	540	1,220

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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industrial uses have developed in the past outside of Cloverdale's ultimate urban boundary. Lands within the sphere of influence need to be retained for future annexation and urban residential development to meet the city's housing needs. The community of Geyserville is experiencing pressure to have its service area boundary expanded to accommodate a greater amount of commercial and residential development.

**Objective LU-11.5:** It is the County's objective that large parcel sizes be retained on lands within the urban expansion boundary of Cloverdale to provide for efficient urban residential development in the future and that any new industrial or urban residential development within the expansion area occur only after annexation by the City.

**Objective LU-11.6:** It is the County's objective that any future expansion of the Geyserville urban service boundary beyond the area designated on the land-use plan map occur only after it is determined that adequate service capacities exist or can be provided to serve the additional lands.

#### **ISSUE #4: Managed Resource Production and Conservation**

The Russian River stream bed contains large deposits of gravel or aggregates which are utilized by the construction industry. Terrace and instream gravel extraction operations can adversely affect hydrology and agriculture unless properly monitored and mitigated. Geothermal development at the Geysers provides a major source of electrical power. Access to this area is restricted by the topography and limited road network; public services, including response times for emergency services, are limited; the slopes of many hillsides are steep and unstable; and geothermal development is incompatible with most other uses due to the noise and pollutants generated.

**Objective LU-11.7:** It is the County's objective to continue managed development of terrace and instream aggregate resources and geothermal resources in a manner which assures that adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated; development other than geothermal exploration and production shall be discouraged on lands within the known geothermal resource area.

#### **ISSUE #5: Environmental Constraints**

Many lands in the Cloverdale/Northeast County area have numerous environmental hazards and development constraints. Lands in the valley floors adjacent to the Russian River are subject to flooding. Many hillside areas have slopes over 30 percent, are geologically unstable, have high fire hazard ratings, are traversed by earthquake fault zones and are in marginal or scarce water-availability zones. Both the valley floors and hillsides are classified as unsuitable for septic waste disposal systems.

**TABLE LU-10:**  
**Cloverdale / N.E. County: Summary of Land-use Plan Data**

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas		Rural	Unincorporated Area
	Geyserville	Cloverdale Expansion Area	Area	Total
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>				
No. of existing parcels (1985)	148	189	2,265	2,602
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	171	15	407	593
Total potential parcels (DUs)	319	204	2,672	3,195
Potential Population	852	545	7,134	8,531
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.70	---	0.60	---
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	42%	---	67%	---
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>				
No. of Parcels	33	7	9	49
Acreage	20 Ac.	6 Ac.	260 Ac.	286 Ac.
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>				
No. of Parcels	11	38	8	57
Acreage	17 Ac.	428 Ac.	74	519
<b>COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS</b>				
Resource-related				
No. of Parcels	---	---	1	1
Acreage	---	---	344 Ac.	344 Ac.
Recreation or Visitor Serving				
No. of Parcels	---	---	1	1
Acreage	---	---	15	15

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
 DN:LUTBLS.PD Pg 2

**Objective LU-11.8** It is the County's objective that commercial or industrial development not occur on those lands within the Cloverdale/Northeast area which are subject to environmental hazards or constraints and that residential densities not exceed one unit per 60 acres on these lands.

### **3.2.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE CLOVERDALE/NORTHEAST COUNTY AREA**

The County shall utilize the following policies for commercial uses and development in the Cloverdale/Northeast County region:

**LU-11a:** In the urban service boundary of Geyserville, discretionary permit approval within the "Limited Commercial" and "General Commercial" use categories may include new or expanded and/or intensified uses in keeping with the character of the community. The following findings shall be made by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit:

1. The proposed use specifically serves local area needs or provides facilities to serve the needs of visitors and the tourism industry.
2. The proposed use is of a size, scale, and intensity appropriate to the existing developed community.
3. The proposed use utilizes a building height, mass, silhouette, colors, and material which are compatible with the historic architecture of the community.
4. Service capacities or response times -- including sewer, water, fire, and police protection -- are available to serve the proposed use without adversely affecting the level of service received by other users.

**LU-11b:** Several parcels within the urban service boundary of Geyserville are designated as "Limited Industrial" to provide for new or expanded light industrial uses, such as agricultural processing, contractor's yards, lumber yards, or cabinet shop in keeping with the rural character of the community. The following findings shall be made by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit:

1. The proposed use does not involve heavy manufacturing or heavy industrial uses.
2. The proposed use does not utilize or produce flammable, explosive, or noxious materials.
3. The site is adequately screened from the roadway and adjacent residential or commercial uses.
4. The proposed use is of a size, scale and intensity appropriate to the existing community.



**LU-11c:** The Alexander Valley Store and Jintown are designated as "Limited Commercial" to accommodate existing local- and tourist-serving retail uses. Approval of any discretionary permit for additional development or uses shall conform to the following criteria:

1. Lodging facilities and restaurants shall be prohibited.
2. The use will not adversely affect adjacent agricultural or resource uses.

**LU-11d:** The Souverain Winery, Paulsen Winery, Geyser Peak Winery, Rasmussen property, and Asti Winery are designated as "Recreation and Visitor Serving Commercial" to accommodate existing or proposed wineries and associated restaurants and/or lodging facilities. The following findings shall be made by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit for new or expanded and/or intensified uses:

1. The proposed use is supportive of the sale or production of Sonoma County agricultural products.
2. Lands shall have demonstrated suitability for septic waste disposal and adequate groundwater supply.
3. The use will not adversely affect adjacent agricultural or resource uses.
4. The level of service on affected roadways will be maintained at level "C" or above.

**LU-11e:** The KOA, Preston, and American Trails Campgrounds are designated as "Recreation and Visitor Serving Commercial" to accommodate existing and approved campground uses. The following findings shall be made by the appropriate decision-making body prior to the approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit for new or expanded uses:

1. The use is campground related and oriented to campground occupants.
2. The use will not adversely affect adjacent resources or agricultural uses.
3. The level of service on affected roadways will be maintained at level "C" or above.

**LU-11f:** Additional "General Commercial" and "Limited Commercial" land-use designations shall not be approved outside the urban service boundaries of Cloverdale and Geyserville. Except within the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, where such uses are expressly prohibited, the "Recreation and Visitor Commercial" category may be applied to single parcels to accommodate small restaurants, lodging, and other related facilities. Any designation of sites for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use involves the restoration of a designated county landmark and does not require the construction of any new structures or any major building additions.
2. The use will not adversely affect adjacent agricultural or resource uses.
3. Traffic generated by the use can be accommodated with an acceptable level of service on existing roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. Adequate water supply with sufficient volume and pressure for both fire suppression and domestic use is available.
5. Adequate access is available for emergency vehicles.

**LU-11g:** Additional lodging, bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, and retail businesses are expressly prohibited in the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. Larger tasting rooms or visitor centers at wineries shall be accommodated where appropriate through application of a "Recreation and Visitor Commercial" overlay. Approval of any amendment to the land-use map for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use will not require the removal of an existing vineyard and will not impact existing agricultural operations.
2. Visual impacts can be mitigated through building setbacks and screening.
3. The site is not located within an environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, fault zone, riparian corridor, or unique habitat area.
4. Traffic generated by the use can be accommodated with an acceptable level of service on existing roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
5. Adequate access is available for emergency vehicles.

**LU-11h:** Visitor serving commercial uses such as lodging and retail stores shall not be accommodated on parcels along roadways between Warm Springs Dam and Highway 101.

**LU-11i:** Improved camp grounds and guest ranches may be permitted on lands classified in the "Resource Conservation" land-use designation through an amendment to a "Recreation and Visitor Commercial" land-use overlay. Approval of any amendment to designate a parcel for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use is located in close proximity to a major recreational area such as the Russian River or Lake Sonoma.
2. The use is compatible with the primary resource use of the land.

3. The use does not create an adverse impact on adjacent agricultural lands or other resources.
4. The use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on roadways.
5. Adequate water supply in sufficient volume and pressure for fire suppression and domestic use is available.
6. Adequate law enforcement and fire protection services are available.

**LU-11j:** Additional "Limited Industrial" lands shall not be designated outside the urban service boundaries of Cloverdale and Geyserville.

**LU-11k:** About 13 acres adjacent to Lytton Station Road are designated for "limited commercial" use. The following findings shall be made by the appropriate decision-making body before approving any quasi-judicial discretionary permit for development in this area:

1. The proposed use is specifically related to agricultural production or serves other resource-related commercial needs.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential and agricultural areas.
3. A visual analysis has been prepared and the proposed design, height, and scale of the project is compatible with the Highway 101 Scenic Corridor and any adverse visual impacts are mitigated.
4. Buildings are flood proof and no filling of the flood plain shall occur.

The following policies of the County of Sonoma related to urban service boundaries and urban expansion areas shall be utilized in the Cloverdale/Northeast County area:

**LU-11l:** Additional lands shall not be annexed into the Geyserville urban service area until the Geyserville Specific Plan is restudied to evaluate the availability of services, impacts on adjacent agricultural uses, and impacts on the scenic corridor. Design guidelines shall be incorporated into the revised specific plan.

**LU-11m:** The urban expansion boundary for Cloverdale corresponds to the sphere of influence adopted by LAFCO on February 4, 1982 with the exceptions of: 1) the McCray Road area; 2) existing development south of Cloverdale and west of Highway 101; and 3) lands located between Highway 101, the Russian River and Dutcher Creek Road. These areas are included within the urban expansion boundary but are not within the sphere of influence as of 1986.



**LU-11n:** The ultimate urban boundary of Cloverdale should not extend east beyond the Russian River or west of Highway 101 into the Oat Valley area.

**LU-11o:** Subdivision of land for residential development shall not be permitted within the urban boundary of Cloverdale until annexation occurs; the "Rural Residential" 20 density and "Resource Conservation" designations are applied to accomplish this purpose.

**LU-11p:** Industrial development within the urban expansion area of Cloverdale shall be limited to expansion of uses existing as of 1986. Development on vacant parcels shall not be approved prior to annexation. The following findings shall be made prior to granting approval for quasi-judicial discretionary permits for expansions:

1. Adequate water supply with sufficient volume and pressure for fire suppression is available.
2. Frontage improvements, including curbs and gutters, landscaping, and signs meet the standards of the City of Cloverdale.

The County shall utilize the following policies related to resource lands:

**LU-11q:** Quarry, instream, and terrace sites designated in the "Aggregate Resources Management Plan" are priority sites for extraction of aggregate resources. No other sites shall be designated without first amending the "Aggregate Resources Management Plan" and fully reviewing potential environmental impacts. Terrace mining is expressly prohibited in the Alexander Valley.

**LU-11r:** A Geothermal Resource Management Plan shall be prepared for the Geysers area to establish development guidelines and policies for environmental monitoring and impact mitigation.

**LU-11s:** Any property within a known Geothermal Resource Area not designated within the "Geothermal Resource" land-use designation shall not be authorized for geothermal development unless and until the land-use plan map is amended to the "Geothermal Resource" use category. An environmental impact report shall be required prior to approval of any amendment of this type; approval of any amendment shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The development will not adversely impact nearby agricultural lands.
2. The natural resources of the area, including watersheds and habitats, rare and endangered species, and scenic resources, can be protected.
3. Adequate public services, including roads, are available.

**LU-11t:** Intensity of residential development permitted within any natural resource category shall be reflective of the general environmental constraints of the area and the accessibility to urban areas. Generally, residential densities shall not exceed one unit per 320 acres in Geothermal areas and one unit per 60 acres in other resource areas.

### **3.3 HEALDSBURG AND ENVIRONS**

#### **3.3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Healdsburg and environs, an environmentally diverse region in north-central Sonoma County, encompasses about 107,000 acres. High quality wines are produced from the vineyards of the Dry Creek Valley and the Russian River basin. In addition, the Russian River is a major location for both gravel extraction operations and recreation uses such as canoeing and swimming. The Mendocino Highlands on the west have limited access and are primarily utilized as grazing lands, although the Mill Creek area has extensive timber stands. Along the Highway 101 corridor are located the City of Healdsburg and the unincorporated community of Windsor, the two urban centers in the planning area. About seven out of ten of the area's 19,499 residents in 1980 resided within these two communities. Areas outside of the valley floor and lower foothills are relatively inaccessible and are sparsely populated. Employment is provided by agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

#### **3.3.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Between 1980 and 2005, the planning area is projected to gain an additional 26,000 residents and reach a total population of 45,500, as shown in Table LU-11. The rate of growth, over 130 percent during the 25-year period, would be the highest of the nine sub-county planning regions. Healdsburg's population is expected to double from 7,220 to 14,800 while Windsor would experience a 292 percent increase from 6,150 residents to 24,100. The rural remainder of the planning area is projected to have relatively little growth with fewer than 500 additional residents being added to rural areas. By the year 2005, 86 percent of the area's population would reside in the two urban areas. Employment expansion is projected to lag behind population growth; about 6,970 additional jobs are expected, as shown in Table LU-12, a 95 percent increase. Major growth is expected in the service and retail sectors with the establishment of a commercial center in Windsor, the redevelopment of downtown Healdsburg, and the growth of the tourism industry.

The land-use plan map for the Healdsburg and Environs region is presented in Figure LU-6c; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-13.

#### **3.3.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **ISSUE #1: Preservation of Agriculture**

Prime farmlands are found in the portions of Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys which lie within the boundaries of the planning area. Other lands along the Russian River also contain prime soils. Vineyards planted in these areas produce some of the world's finest wines and should be protected from urban encroachment. Their proximity to the rapidly developing Highway 101 corridor increases development pressure. Issues include concerns about the possibility that additional visitor-serving commercial uses would result in adverse effects on agricultural production and agricultural lands.



TABLE LU-11

Healdsburg and Environs: Selected Sociodemographic Data, 1980 to 2005

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b><u>TOTAL POPULATION</u></b>						
Healdsburg and Environs	19,499	26,200	39,800	45,500	6,700	26,000
<b><u>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</u></b>						
Healdsburg (City)	7,220	9,500	13,000	14,800	2,280	7,580
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	12,279	16,700	26,800	30,700	4,420	18,420
City Expansion Areas	560	560	560	560	0	0
Communities						
With Sewer Service						
Windsor	6,150	10,500	20,300	24,100	4,350	17,950
Other Unincorporated	5,569	5,640	5,940	6,040	70	470
<b><u>HOUSEHOLDS</u></b>						
Population in Households	19,190	25,800	39,310	44,940	6,610	25,750
Average Household Size	2.67	2.61	2.60	2.58	-0.06	-0.09
Total Households	7,124	9,900	15,130	17,430	2,780	10,310
<b><u>HOUSING UNITS</u></b>						
Year-round	7,288	10,060	15,300	17,600	2,780	10,310
Seasonal / Occasional Use	330	340	340	340	10	10
Total Housing Units	7,618	10,400	15,640	17,940	2,790	10,320

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
 DN:LUTBLP.HH Pg 3

**Objective LU-12.1:** It is the County's objective that prime agricultural lands in the Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys not be converted to non-agricultural uses and any future development authorized by the land-use plan be compatible with preservation of agricultural lands and agricultural production.

## **ISSUE #2: Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Constraints**

The middle reach of the Russian River is a major source of aggregate for the construction industry of Sonoma County. As this area also contains prime farmlands, terrace and instream operations need careful monitoring to avoid adverse impacts. Hillside areas provide valuable watershed and habitat resources. Commercial timber stands are located in the Mill Creek area. Access into many of these areas is limited, hillsides are steep and unstable, and public services are not available. The valley floors adjacent to the Russian River are subject to flooding. Issues pertain to the types and intensities of land uses that should be allowed on lands which encompass natural resources or which possess environmental constraints.

**Objective LU-12.2:** It is the County's objective that terrace and instream mining of aggregates in the middle reach of the Russian River be managed so that any potential adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated.

**Objective LU-12.3:** It is the County's objective that commercial and industrial development not occur in the resource areas of the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, except on a small-scale and as ancillary to the resource use, and that residential densities be very low except in the lower benchlands along the valleys.

## **ISSUE #3: Commercial and Industrial Land-uses**

Windsor and Healdsburg serve as the commercial and industrial centers for the planning area but a small number of existing uses as of 1986 were scattered along several roadways in the region. Sufficient industrial and commercial land has been designated within urban areas to meet projected needs to year 2005, but development of the winery-related tourist industry will likely create pressure for tourist-related uses outside these areas.

**Objective LU-12.4:** It is the County's objective that Windsor and Healdsburg comprise the commercial and industrial centers for the planning area and that they provide a full range of commercial services and employment opportunities.

**Objective LU-12.5:** It is the County's objective that additional local-serving commercial uses not occur in the rural areas of the Healdsburg and Environs region and that tourist-related businesses be located in Healdsburg and Windsor where public services are available.

TABLE LU-12

Healdsburg and Environs: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	1,220	1,160	1,130	1,240	-60	20
Centralized Manufacturing	470	830	1,200	1,330	360	850
Decentralized Manufacturing	1,430	1,690	1,850	2,040	260	610
Transportation / Utilities	190	210	280	310	20	120
Retail and Wholesale Trade	1,280	1,690	2,470	2,710	390	1,430
Construction	300	410	610	670	110	370
Services	1,430	1,990	3,110	3,420	560	1,990
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	140	200	350	390	60	250
Government	810	1,210	1,960	2,150	400	1,340
Total	7,270	9,380	12,960	14,240	2,100	6,970
Basic	3,660	4,350	4,970	5,460	680	1,800
Population-Serving	3,610	5,030	7,990	8,780	1,420	5,170

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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#### **ISSUE #4: Urban Service Boundaries and Urban Expansion Areas**

The sphere of influence of the City of Healdsburg as of 1986 included the Fitch Mountain area and undeveloped parcels north of town. The city would be the appropriate entity to provide services such as fire protection and to operate sewer and water facilities once their installation to acceptable city standards has been financed by property owners in the Fitch Mountain area. An ultimate urban service area boundary has been delineated for Windsor through the specific plan adopted for that area in September 1986. In addition, the Windsor Water District in 1986 provided sewer and water to areas outside the ultimate urban service boundary. Sufficient amounts of land exist within the urban service area boundary to accommodate the projected residential, commercial and industrial needs of Windsor through year-2005. Issues pertain to determination of appropriate criteria by which to evaluate any future proposals to extend urban service area boundaries and to determination of appropriate county land-use policies for lands within expansion areas prior to annexation.

**Objective LU-12.6:** It is the County's objective that large parcel sizes be retained on lands within the future expansion area of the city of Healdsburg to allow for their efficient development upon annexation.

**Objective LU-12.7:** It is the County's objective that urban services not be extended beyond the urban service area boundary of Windsor and that the boundary as designated on the land-use plan map constitute the sphere of influence boundary for any future incorporation effort and city.

#### **ISSUE #5: Preservation of Open Space**

Major development of new urban land uses is contemplated within the City of Healdsburg and the community of Windsor. The Highway 101 corridor which connects these communities and other urban centers is likely to experience increased development pressures over time. Lands along the corridor have agricultural value, limited services, and are not needed to meet projected needs for future residential or commercial development. Low density between the developed areas along the corridor would define urban boundaries and provide visual and aesthetic benefits.

**Objective LU-12.8:** It is the County's objective that compact urban boundaries be attained for Windsor and Healdsburg and that commercial and industrial development not occur on lands between the two urban areas and that residential densities on these lands remain very low.

2. The use involves the restoration of a designated county landmark and does not require the construction of any new structures or any major building additions.
3. The use will not adversely impact adjacent agricultural or resource lands.
4. Traffic generated by the use can be accommodated on existing roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
5. Adequate water supply with sufficient volume and pressure for both fire suppression and domestic use is available.
6. Adequate access is available for emergency vehicles.

**LU-12f:** Additional lodging, bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, and other commercial uses are prohibited in the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. Larger tasting rooms may be accommodated in the "Vineyards and Specialty Crops" land-use designation through application of a "Recreation and Visitor Commercial" overlay designation. Approval of any amendment of the land-use plan map for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use will not require the removal of an existing vineyard and will not impact existing agricultural operations.
2. Visual impacts can be mitigated through building setbacks and screening.
3. The site is not located within an environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, fault zone, riparian corridor, or unique habitat area.
4. Traffic generated by the use can be accommodated on existing roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
5. Adequate access is available for emergency vehicles.

**LU-12g:** On lands designated within the "Vineyards and Specialty Crops" use category, development of additional lodging and restaurant uses shall be prohibited. Proposals to amend the general plan map to a "Recreation and Visitor" land use category or overlay shall not be approved. On lands with other land-use designations, any amendment for "recreational and visitor-serving commercial" uses shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use is located in close proximity to a major recreational area such as the Russian River.
2. The use is ancillary to and compatible with the primary resource use of the parcel.
3. The use does not create an adverse impact on adjacent agricultural or other resource uses.

4. The traffic resulting from the use can be accommodated on the existing roadway network without generating an adverse impact on the level of service.
5. Adequate water supply in sufficient volume and pressure for fire suppression and domestic use is available.
6. Adequate law enforcement and fire protection services are available.

The following County policies are applicable to urban service boundaries and urban expansion areas or to public and quasi-public land uses:

**LU-12h:** The appropriate sphere of influence for Healdsburg is that adopted by LAFCO and in effect as of 1986. Expansion of the sphere of influence boundary to add any land area west of Highway 101 does not conform to the intent of this plan.

**LU-12i:** Residential and commercial development shall not be authorized by the County within the urban boundary of Healdsburg prior to annexation. The "Rural Residential", 20-acre density, "Resource Conservation", and "Vineyards and Specialty Crops" designations on the land-use plan map are intended to reflect land uses existing as of 1986 and to minimize additional development.

**LU-12j:** Annexation of the Fitch Mountain area to the City of Healdsburg is encouraged once the property owners have established a mechanism to improve streets, drainage, sewer, water, and electric facilities to city standards through formation of an assessment district or other appropriate means.

**LU-13k:** It is the County's policy that the ultimate sewer and water service areas and sphere of influence of the Windsor Water District conform to the boundaries of the urban service area indicated on the land-use plan map.

**LU-12l:** Any future modification of the urban boundary of Windsor shall be limited to parcels bisected by the boundary and is subject to the standards established under the Windsor Specific Plan.

**LU-12m:** Within the Windsor Redevelopment Project Area shown in Figure LU-7a, the following range of discretion may be used in applying and interpreting the land-use plan map when considering projects involving the Redevelopment Agency as a participant:

1. A parcel which is 8,000 square feet or smaller and contiguous (or separated by a public right-of-way) to another parcel which has a different commercial, public, or residential use category may be authorized the same use as any of the contiguous parcels in order to accomplish an integrated redevelopment project.



2. Public and quasi public uses, including public parking, may be authorized on any parcel or group of parcels whose combined size is 16,000 square feet or less.

Any necessary rezoning shall be processed concurrently with the appropriate development permit(s); applications for rezoning and/or a development permit shall not be determined to be complete until an administrative finding has been made by the Planning Director that the proposed project conforms to the intent of this policy.

**LU-12n:** The "Public/Quasi-Public, School" category is applied to the Rio Lindo Adventist Academy to accommodate the school and associated housing for students and faculty. Any expansion shall conform to the following criteria:

1. Any housing must be associated with the school.
2. Adequate services, including water, streets, and sewage disposal are available.

The following land-use policies shall apply to lands located within designated open space areas:

**LU-12o:** Building envelopes shall be required as a condition of approval on all subdivisions of lands visible from Highway 101 to preserve the scenic value of the corridor. Building sites shall be located below the ridgeline for hillside developments and utilize existing vegetation as screening.

**LU-12p:** Low intensity and low density uses consistent with environmental constraints and resource values shall be maintained outside urban areas. Roadway intersections with Highway 101 are specifically excluded from commercial/industrial development unless they are within the boundary of an urban service area.



# WINDSOR REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA LAND USE ELEMENT





### 3.4 RUSSIAN RIVER AREA

#### 3.4.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Russian River Planning Area encompasses about 87 square miles (56,000 acres) extending from the Laguna de Santa Rosa westward to Austin Creek. The Russian River resort area comprises the core of the region and includes the unincorporated communities of Guerneville and Monte Rio and small-lot residential areas of Guerneville Park and Rio Nido. Many residential areas in these communities were originally developed as second homes but a large number of these dwellings have now been converted to permanent residences. The community of Cazadero, which built up around the timber industry, is the focus of limited commercial services in the northwestern portion of the planning area; Forestville, a community in the southeastern portion, provides a larger array of services and a more concentrated residential pattern, although its character remains essentially rural.

The Russian River itself and the surrounding coast redwood ecosystem are the dominant features of the planning area and provide the setting for extensive public and private recreational facilities. The redwood groves provide not only a high scenic quality to the area, but also a valuable natural resource. Similarly valuable as a scenic and habitat resource are various small watersheds which are tributary to the Russian River. Apples remain the dominant agricultural crop in this region, although vineyards extend along River Road and Highway 116 in increasingly extensive acreages.

#### 3.4.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Projected population, households and housing units for the years 1990, 2000 and 2005 appear in Table LU-14; the land use plan for the Russian River Area is designed to accommodate the amount of growth projected over the 25 year period from 1980-2005. Projected changes in levels of employment by major industry group are presented in Table LU-15; employment projections are by place of work.

In the 25-year period from 1980 to year-2005 the population residing in this planning area is expected to increase by about 22 percent while employment is projected to grow by approximately 60 percent. The projections indicate that in the future a larger share of the resident workforce would be able to secure employment locally, reducing the extensive reliance on outcommuting to employment in Santa Rosa and elsewhere. In this region about 75 percent of the employment is projected to be in population-serving industries, reflecting the importance of tourist commerce. While the total number of households in the Russian River Area is forecast to increase in the 25-year period by one fourth or 1,410, the increase in housing units is expected to be smaller, reflecting conversion of some seasonal dwellings to permanent year-round occupancy. The average household size, which is lower than the countywide average, is projected to decrease slightly from 2.37 persons per household in 1980 to 2.28 in 2005.

TABLE LU-14

Russian River Area: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>						
Russian River Area	13,007	14,120	15,200	15,800	1,110	2,790
<b>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</b>						
Unincorporated Area (Total)	13,007	14,120	15,200	15,800	1,110	2,790
Communities	3,182	3,880	4,720	5,250	700	2,070
With Sewer Service	2,045	2,620	3,320	3,750	575	1,705
Forestville	520	600	800	950	80	430
Guerneville	1,525	2,020	2,520	2,800	495	1,275
Other Communities						
Monte Rio	1,137	1,260	1,400	1,500	120	360
Other Unincorporated	9,825	10,240	10,480	10,550	415	725
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
Population in Households	12,906	14,010	15,090	15,690	1,100	2,785
Average Household Size	2.37	2.31	2.30	2.28	-0.06	-0.09
Total Households	5,470	6,050	6,570	6,890	580	1,420
<b>HOUSING UNITS</b>						
Year-round	5,761	6,350	6,870	7,180	580	1,420
Seasonal / Occasional Use	2,704	2,600	2,500	2,500	(-100)*	(-200)*
Total Housing Units	8,465	8,950	9,370	9,680	480	1,220

\* Assumes conversions of seasonal/occasional units to year-round use.

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.

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The land-use plan map for the Russian River Area is presented in Figure LU-6d; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-16.

### 3.4.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### ISSUE #1: Relationship of Residential Development to Urban Services

Much of the lot pattern in the Russian River planning area is antiquated, reflecting the lack of correlation in the past between parcel sizes that were allowed and the land area needed to provide sanitary and water facilities for residential use in a manner which would protect public health and safety. In the 1920's and '30's, legal subdivisions of 25' X 100' and 50' X 100' lots were drawn on paper, recorded and parcels subsequently sold -- often raffled off at movie theatres -- without any provision for infrastructure. Some of these parcels could not be developed due to steepness of slope, inability to support septic systems or lack of water; many were purchased and developed as second homes during the heyday of the River as a resort. However, in the 1970's, demand for inexpensive housing resulted in the conversion of many structures in second-home developments to permanent residences and pressure developed for public agencies to provide urban services to solve resulting health problems and to permit development of constrained vacant lots. Establishment of the Russian River Sanitation District was a response in the Guerneville community; elsewhere, extending along the river from outside Forestville to Monte Rio, parcelization is intense but development sporadic, reflecting the lack of full public services.

Four communities in the Russian River Planning area are provided some or all urban services, although only Forestville and Guerneville have both public sewer and water systems. Development in Forestville as of 1986 was constrained by inadequate disposal facilities. In January of 1985, the Regional Water Quality Control Board issued a cease-and-desist order for sewer hook-up permits and the Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Public Works to prepare a study and develop a reliable dry weather effluent storage/disposal system for existing and planned development. The study and resulting solutions are anticipated to be effectuated by summer 1987. Additional sewer systems in the Russian River Planning Area are not contemplated to be established in the 20-year planning period. Monte Rio and Cazadero have public water systems, and along the river there is a proliferation of small mutual water systems and private water companies. Many of these have problems in providing adequate service to existing development and would require major investment to expand. A significant issue pertains to whether water and sewer services should be provided (or improved) in order to allow building on existing vacant lots in antiquated or non-standard subdivisions, or alternatively, whether the county should attempt to merge lots which don't meet current standards.



TABLE LU-15

Russian River area: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	410	370	340	380	-40	-30
Centralized Manufacturing	240	420	450	470	180	230
Decentralized Manufacturing	210	230	240	250	20	46
Transportation / Utilities	30	40	40	50	10	20
Retail and Wholesale Trade	750	970	1,110	1,170	220	420
Construction	110	130	170	190	30	80
Services	510	650	760	820	140	310
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	70	80	120	140	10	70
Government	360	460	530	560	100	200
Total	2,680	3,350	3,760	4,020	670	1,340
Basic	940	1,110	1,140	1,230	170	290
Population-Serving	1,740	2,240	2,620	2,790	500	1,050

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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**Objective LU-13.1:** It is the County's objective that the urban service boundaries shown on the land-use map for the Russian River planning area provide adequate residential development potential to accommodate projected growth for the 20-year planning period.

**Objective LU-13.2:** It is the County's objective that no new urban service areas be established in the Russian River Area.

**Objective LU-13.3:** It is the County's objective that any future expansion of the boundaries of existing urban service areas be limited to extensions to any contiguous existing development which has demonstrated failure of on-site septic or well systems. Such service shall be provided by out-of-district agreement rather than annexation and shall not result in urban level density.

**Objective LU-13.4:** It is the County's objective that the amount of new development within existing service areas be commensurate with the ability of the district to provide an adequate level of service to all users.

**Objective LU-13.5:** It is the County's objective that contiguous substandard undevelopable parcels under single ownership which fail to meet current health and safety requirements at the time of requested development be merged.

## **ISSUE #2: Type and Intensity of Development in Flood Hazard Areas**

Properties along the Russian River and its tributaries have experienced recurrent flooding. As the use of the residential properties has shifted from vacation to permanent dwelling units, improvements have become more substantial, in both residential and commercial areas. The resultant impacts of annual flooding have become more costly. The Federal Flood Insurance Program prohibits construction of any impediment within the area of a flood channel known as the floodway; development within the flood plain, the broader area subject to inundation in the event of a 100 year storm event is left to local policy. Many portions of the Russian River region which are subject to flooding are already intensely developed, with such development substantially predating the federal legislation. As of 1986, many of the remaining parcels bore zoning and specific plan land-use designations that would permit new residential development. While not expressly prohibited, residential development in these areas raises concern about risks to human health and safety and to property.

**Objective LU-13.6:** It is the County's objective that new uses within the floodway of the Russian River, as designated on the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), be limited to those recreation and visitor-serving commercial activities which may be accommodated without construction of permanent structures.

**TABLE LU-16:**  
**Russian River Area: Summary of Land-use Plan Data**

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas		Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
	Forestville	Guerneville		
RESIDENTIAL				
No. of existing parcels (1985)	290	2,834	8,045	11,169
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	185	381	315	881
Total potential parcels (DUs)	475	3,215	8,360	12,050
Potential Population	1,083	8,045	12,050	27,474
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.88	0.38	0.63	0.58
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	14%	162%	58%	74%
COMMERCIAL				
No. of Parcels	61	361	90	512
Acreage	38	292	84	414
INDUSTRIAL				
No. of Parcels	9	---	---	9
Acreage	12	---	---	12
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS				
Resource-related				
No. of Parcels	---	---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---	---
Recreation or Visitor Serving				
No. of Parcels	---	---	6	6
Acreage	---	---	571	571



**Objective LU-13.7:** It is the County's objective that the residential use designations on the land-use plan map not allow the potential for any future division of parcels which are located within the boundaries of the 100-year flood event.

### **ISSUE #3: The Amount and Types of Growth in Central Forestville**

In the arena of land-use planning policy, the community of Forestville held a unique place as of 1986. A specific plan adopted in 1975 was effectively rescinded and the effluent disposal capacity of the sanitation district was deemed inadequate to meet the discharge requirements of the Regional Water Quality Board. This combination of circumstances engendered the appointment by the Board of Supervisors of a Forestville Citizens Advisory Committee to make policy recommendations for land-use policy in the community in lieu of the rescinded specific plan. The Forestville citizenry was unanimous in its desire to retain its small town, close-knit identity. Issues revolved around how much additional development could be absorbed without changing this character or straining public services, specifically sewer, roads and schools; how to affect the design of new residential and commercial developments to maintain the rural character; how to make available commercial and industrial opportunities to provide local employment, and how to preserve the desirable environmental qualities of the area including the riparian habitat areas and ridgelines.

**Objective LU-13.8:** It is the County's objective that the "rural village" character of Forestville be maintained through design and development standards which support small-scale development and provision of substantial amounts of open space and native landscaping.

### **ISSUE #4: Location and Intensity of Residential Uses**

Based on densities assigned by the land-use plan map analyses indicate a six percent increase in the potential number of residential building sites or units in urban service areas (Guerneville and Forestville); a three percent increase in rural residential areas; a 15 percent increase in agricultural areas, largely in the "Diverse Agriculture" category; and a one percent increase in other natural resource areas. These data reflect the fact that the communities of this planning area are already subdivided to the maximum extent in light of the geologic and flood constraints and of the ability of the various public service districts to serve existing and future needs. In Guerneville and Monte Rio the issue is whether to allow residential development on vacant parcels which lie entirely within the flood plain when such development could increase the threat to public health and safety and property. In Forestville, issues pertain to how to maintain the "country town" residential character of the existing community. A larger amount of new development than generally allocated elsewhere in this planning area occurs in the outskirts of Forestville and in Green Valley, areas which already have a mix of small rural residential parcels as well as parcels where farming still occurs. Because of the increasing popularity of small farms, the balance between providing housing opportunity and avoiding conflict between farming activities and residential uses is a concern in these areas.

**Objective LU-13.9:** It is the County's objective that no new residential subdivisions be created in areas within the boundaries of the 100 year flood event along the Russian River and its tributaries.

**Objective LU-13.10:** It is the County's objective to provide a variety of lot sizes and densities in the Russian River Planning area to allow development of housing of varying types and costs.

**Objective LU-13.11:** It is the County's objective that new second home developments not occur along the Russian River and its tributaries; evaluations of proposed residential developments shall be based on impacts of year-round occupancy.

**ISSUE #5: Amount, Location and Intensity of Commercial and Industrial Development**

In the Russian River Area, commercial and industrial development have occurred at scattered locations along the major roadways paralleling the river, although primarily in the river communities from Forestville to Monte Rio. As in other regions of the county, whether to permit any commercial expansion along arterial roadways and how much expansion to permit in the communities are issues. The intensity of permitted commercial and industrial development and the balance between local-, region- and visitor-serving uses and the appropriate locations for these uses are issues which are resolved by the land-use plan map.

**Objective LU-13.12:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan for the Russian River Area designate an amount of land for commercial/industrial use which is sufficient to serve the size of the projected local residential community through 2005.

**Objective LU-13.13:** It is the County's objective that Guerneville remain the primary commercial center of the Russian River Area and that the "General Commercial" land-use category be applied only to lands which are within its urban service boundary.

**Objective LU-13.14:** It is the County's objective that the communities of Forestville, Rio Nido, Monte Rio and Cazadero constitute secondary commercial centers for the Russian River Region and that commercial uses be primarily local-serving, and in keeping with the existing character and scale of the community.

**Objective LU-13.15:** It is the County's objective to maintain a balance in commercial development in the Russian River planning area between those uses that accommodate the needs of the permanent local population and those oriented towards the needs of the transient visitor population.



**Objective LU-13.16:** It is the County's objective to encourage commercial and industrial development in Central Forestville so that it is conveniently located for the local labor force.

**Objective LU-13.17:** It is the County's objective that the existing commercial uses as of 1986 along River Road/Highway 116 outside the urban service areas be designated "limited commercial" but that expansions or intensifications of those uses not be permitted.

#### **ISSUE # 6: Resource Protection and Enhancement**

Both the visual character and the economy of the Russian River region are directly tied to its natural resources. Preservation of redwood groves is a major concern in the river area; protection and enhancement of the river itself and its tributaries -- specifically concern about the impact of discharge of treated wastewater effluent -- is a crucial issue; promotion of the viticulture and apple industries and preservation of the productive agricultural soils are important considerations in the Forestville/Green Valley areas; retention of managed timber resources, grazing lands and watershed resources is also addressed by the land-use plan map.

**Objective LU-13.18:** It is the County's objective to conserve the riparian habitat in Central Forestville by designating the creek a modified natural riparian corridor.

**Objective LU-13.19:** It is the County's objective that permitted residential densities not exceed 160 acres per dwelling on any lands within the Russian River Area which are designated within the "Timber Lands" use category and 40 acres per dwelling on lands designated within the "Natural Resource Conservation" category; it is the County's intent that large parcel sizes be retained to the extent practicable in such areas.

**Objective LU-13.20:** It is the County's objective that the number and scale of recreation and visitor-serving commercial uses in the resource and agricultural areas of the Russian River region be compatible with maintenance of the quality of the natural resource.

#### **3.4.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE RUSSIAN RIVER AREA**

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to the Forestville and/or Guerneville urban service areas:

**LU-13a:** Connections to the sewer system of any parcel located beyond the urban service boundaries established in this land-use plan shall be granted only for existing development whose on-site systems are failing and resulting in health and safety problems. Provision of public sewer or water due to health and safety



problems shall not result in increased densities. Expansion of urban service area boundaries to serve new development shall be prohibited. No new urban service areas or entities shall be established by the County in the Russian River area.

**LU-13b:** Approval by the County of discretionary planning permits for residential or commercial development within urban service areas shall be granted only upon written certification by the applicable district that it can meet existing commitments and provide service to the new project without adversely affecting the level-of-service or environmental quality.

**LU-13c:** Residential and commercial development within the Forestville urban service boundary shall be phased to allow the community facilities and services adequate time to absorb new growth, and to maintain the community character; a precise development plan or master plan which specifies the maximum number of building permits for new residences which may be approved annually shall be required for any housing development of ten or more units.

**LU-13d:** The County shall conduct a study to assess alternative route alignments for Highway 116 through Central Forestville, including evaluation of Covey and Mirabel Roads to River Road; the study shall address feasibility, location, design, and financing.

**LU-13e:** Until a public parking facility is constructed in Guerneville, all new, expanded or intensified commercial or residential uses shall be required to meet on-site parking requirements in accord with Chapter 26 of the Sonoma County Code.

The following policies shall apply to residential development within the Russian River Area:

**LU-13f:** All tentative subdivision maps in the Russian River Area shall be required to designate building envelopes which minimize destruction of individual redwood trees and protect the redwood ecosystem. The precise surveyed locations of any redwood trees within the building envelope which are greater than two feet in diameter at four feet above the ground shall be indicated on the tentative map.

**LU-13g:** The County shall not approve creation of any new residential parcel within the 100-year floodplain of the Russian River and its tributary streams and creeks; nor shall building permits for new residences on existing lots be approved in the floodway of the River or its tributaries.

**LU-13h:** Approval by the County of new subdivisions of five or more lots within the Forestville urban service boundary shall include requirements for their site and architectural design review. Design review approval shall be based on the following findings:

1. The scale and design of the project is consistent with the existing rural-village character of the community.
2. The project is designed to retain the predominance of natural landscape over development, and preserves and enhances significant natural features including but not limited to ridge lines, riparian corridors, and significant natural tree stands.
3. The project retains open space amenities associated with a rural lifestyle.
4. The lot pattern and housing design provides for a variety of housing types and costs.
5. Where appropriate to the natural terrain, clustered residential development shall be utilized to maximize open space and a long term scenic easement over the undeveloped portion of the property shall be required.
6. Provision has been made for pedestrian access connecting new residential development to the commercial area.

The following policies shall be applicable to commercial development in the Russian River area:

**LU-13i:** On those lands which are designated with a commercial use category within the floodway of the Russian River or its tributary streams, the County shall not approve discretionary permits which include permanent structures located within the floodway.

**LU-13j:** On those lands which are designated with a "visitor serving commercial" category within the 100 year floodplain designation of the Russian River or its tributaries, new (transient) residential facilities or any remodelling or replacement of existing such facilities shall be required to be flood-proofed or raised above the 100 year flood elevation.

**LU-13k:** In Forestville, Rio-Nido/Guerneville, Monte Rio and Cazadero, the following findings shall be made prior to approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary permit on lands designated "limited commercial" on the land-use plan map:

1. The proposed use is visitor- or local-serving.
2. The proposed use is of a size, scale, intensity and design appropriate to and compatible with the existing developed community and conforms to any design guidelines adopted for that community.

3. On-site parking is available in accord with the requirements of Chapter 26 of the Sonoma County Code.
4. The traffic generated by the proposed use will not result in an adverse impact on the level of service on affected roadways.

**LU-13l:** The application of the "limited commercial" category designation to lands outside urban service area boundaries shall be confined to uses that were existing as of 1986; designations of additional lands shall not be approved.

**LU-13m:** Outside urban service area boundaries, proposals for new "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" uses may be accommodated in appropriate locations on lands designated "natural resource conservation". Any amendment of the land-use plan map to apply the overlay category for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use is located in close proximity to a major recreational area such as the Russian River.
2. The use is compatible with and incidental to the primary resource use of the parcel.
3. The use will retain any existing redwood trees to the maximum extent practicable and will not result in any damage to the redwood ecosystem.
4. The use does not create an adverse impact on any adjacent agricultural lands.
5. The use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on roadways.
6. Adequate water supply in sufficient volume and pressure for fire suppression and domestic use is available..
7. Adequate police and fire protection are available.
8. The use will not have an adverse visual impact on a scenic corridor or scenic landscape unit.

In Forestville, the County shall utilize the following policies related to planning information and referrals for projects:

**LU-13n:** For referral purposes, Forestville shall be defined as coterminous with the elementary school district.

**LU-13o:** A Forestville Planning Committee shall be established for the purpose of reviewing and providing comments on all planning activities in the Forestville referral area. The committee shall develop guidelines in accord with county standards for local design. Said standards include, but are not limited to, size, scale, height, and individuality of structures, coverage,



landscaping, parking, lighting, and streetscape including street furniture, and signage. The "western motif" suggested in the 1975 Specific Plan shall no longer be considered definitive of Forestville.

The County shall utilize the following policies when considering discretionary permits or other land-use proposals related to lands designated within the agricultural and resource categories:

- LU-13p:** All tentative maps shall be required to establish building envelopes and to indicate the location of existing redwood trees within any building envelope which are of two feet in diameter or greater at a height of four feet; building envelopes shall be required to be established in a manner which minimizes destruction of individual redwood trees and protects the redwood ecosystem.
- LU-13q:** All lands zoned TPZ and receiving tax benefits pursuant to Government Code, Chapter 6.7 shall be shown within the "Timber" land-use category. Minimum lot sizes shall reflect the requirements of state law.
- LU-13r:** The permitted density of residential use on lands within any resource category shall be reflective of the general level of environmental and physical constraints of the area and the accessibility to urbanized areas. More intense use of a specific parcel because it is less constrained than surrounding ones may have negative impacts on requirements for and costs of providing community services, as well as visual character, and shall be prohibited.



## 1.5 SANTA ROSA AND ENVIRONS

### 1.5.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Santa Rosa and Environs planning area is located in east-central Sonoma County. Its boundaries are generally Shiloh Road/Mark West Springs Road/Franz Valley Road to the north, the Napa County line to the east, Sonoma Creek to the southeast, Bennett Valley Road/Crane Canyon Road/Wilfred Avenue to the south, and the Laguna de Santa Rosa to the west. A variety of landscapes occur within the planning area, including the flat terrain of the Santa Rosa-Cotati Plain, several small valleys immediately surrounded by rolling hills (Bennett Valley, Rincon Valley, the northern portion of the Sonoma Valley), and the more rugged mountainous areas of the Sonoma and Mayacamas Mountain ranges. Major drainages include Santa Rosa Creek and Mark West Creek, which generally bisect the planning area in an east-west direction, and the bordering waterways of Sonoma Creek (southeast) and the Laguna de Santa Rosa (west). All of these waterways are tributary to the Russian River, except for Sonoma Creek which flows southward to San Pablo Bay.

In 1980, the Santa Rosa Planning Area contained a population of 122,862 persons, over two out of every five county residents. Seventy percent of the area's population resided within urban service areas, including the City of Santa Rosa (83,300 persons), the unincorporated Roseland/Bellevue/South Wright communities immediately southwest of Santa Rosa (9,000 + persons), and the community of Larkfield/Wikiup (2,800 persons). These urban areas are centered along the U.S. Highway 101 and State Highway 12 corridors. Rural and agricultural uses predominate around the perimeter of the planning area. Significant amounts of rural residential development occur in the immediate vicinity of the urban areas, while rural residential development in the east and northeast quadrants is generally low-intensity isolated "pockets" of clustered residential lots -- reflective of the rugged topography and limited access of these areas.

The characteristics of the planning area's economy indicate Santa Rosa's role as the North Coast's regional center for manufacturing, retail trade, and services. In 1980, Santa Rosa and Environs was the location of 52 percent of the entire county's employment opportunities. The size of the planning area's diversified employment base results in a workforce which includes a substantial number of commuters from the other sub-county planning regions. Santa Rosa is the county seat and site of administrative offices of the County of Sonoma as well as regional offices of the State and Federal governments. Although not the dominant economic force within the planning area itself, a significant amount of acreage remains in productive agricultural use. Agricultural activities include vineyards in the areas of River Road, west Santa Rosa, and northern Sonoma Valley, as well as grazing and dairy operations in the areas west and southwest of Santa Rosa.



**TABLE LU-17:**  
**Santa Rosa and Environs: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005**

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b><u>TOTAL POPULATION</u></b>						
Santa Rosa and Environs	122,862	151,200	178,000	190,000	28,340	67,140
<b><u>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</u></b>						
Santa Rosa (City)	83,320	117,000	150,000	165,000	33,680	81,680
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	39,542	34,200	28,000	25,000	-5,340	-14,540
City Expansion Areas	25,830	19,230	10,800	5,800	-5,200	-20,030
Communities (subtotal)	2,960	4,220	6,400	8,300	1,260	5,340
With Sewer Service						
Larkfield-Wikiup	2,859	4,120	6,300	8,200	1,260	5,340
Other Communities						
Fulton	101	100	100	100	0	0
Other Unincorporated	10,752	10,750	10,800	10,900	0	150
<b><u>HOUSEHOLDS</u></b>						
Population in Households	121,168	149,300	175,860	187,720	28,130	66,550
Average Household Size	2.49	2.41	2.38	2.36	-0.08	-0.13
Total Households	48,586	61,870	73,860	79,640	13,280	31,050
<b><u>HOUSING UNITS</u></b>						
Year-round	49,642	62,920	74,910	80,700	13,280	31,050
Seasonal / Occasional Use	898	920	940	950	20	52
Total Housing Units	50,540	63,840	75,850	81,650	13,300	31,100

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986  
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### 3.5.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Table LU-17 illustrates projected growth in population, households, and housing units through year-2005. Santa Rosa and Environs is projected to absorb 38 percent of the County's growth during this period. Within the planning area, the urban development areas of Santa Rosa and Larkfield are anticipated to increase their proportionate share of total planning area growth from 70 percent to 90 percent. The projections assume that approximately 20,000 persons residing in the Roseland, Bellevue, and South Wright areas, and various county "islands" would be annexed into the city of Santa Rosa within the 25-year period from 1980 to 2005. When population growth due to annexations is discounted, the City of Santa Rosa is projected to increase at an actual average growth rate of above 2,500 persons/year. This growth would result in an increase of 76 percent over 1980 levels by year-2005. The other urban area, Larkfield/Wikiup, is anticipated to nearly triple in population, reaching a population of 8,200 persons by year-2005.

Santa Rosa and Environs is anticipated to retain its position as a dominant economic hub for the region north of the Golden Gate, continuing to offer over one-half of the county's total employment opportunities in the year 2005. Although projected growth in population-serving sectors of the economy is the largest of any planning area (an additional 24,000 jobs from 1980 to 2005), growth in basic industry employment is anticipated to increase from 45 percent in 1980 to about 53 percent of the county's total by year-2005 (Table LU-18).

The land-use plan map for the Santa Rosa and Environs Region is presented in Figure LU-6e; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-19.

### 3.5.3 ISSUES, AND OBJECTIVES

#### **ISSUE #1: The extent of land area within urban service boundaries**

Santa Rosa and Environs includes one municipality (City of Santa Rosa) and two county-operated sewer service areas (the South Park Sanitation District, and Airport-Larkfield/Wikiup County Service Area #31). The South Park Sanitation District lies within the sphere of influence of Santa Rosa and lands therein are anticipated to ultimately be annexed into the city. Although issues remain as to whether additional lands should be included, the land area within the urban service boundaries of Santa Rosa and the Airport-Larkfield/Wikiup are adequate to accommodate the projected population and economic growth through year-2005.

**Objective LU-14.1:** It is the County's objective that urban service area boundaries for Santa Rosa and Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup not be expanded to include additional lands and that urban services (such as sewerage and water) not be extended beyond the designated boundaries, except to resolve public health problems associated with the failure of septic waste disposal systems.

TABLE LU-18

Santa Rosa and Environs: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	1,080	1,020	990	1,090	-60	10
Centralized Manufacturing	5,760	10,790	16,190	17,800	5,030	12,050
Decentralized Manufacturing	990	940	880	960	-50	-30
Transportation / Utilities	3,040	3,390	3,670	4,030	360	990
Retail and Wholesale Trade	14,260	18,400	21,720	23,890	4,140	9,620
Construction	4,630	5,760	6,740	7,410	1,130	2,790
Services	12,600	16,180	18,800	20,670	3,580	8,060
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4,730	6,190	7,150	7,860	1,450	3,120
Government	9,470	11,030	13,590	14,940	1,570	5,470
Total	56,560	73,700	89,720	98,640	17,140	42,090
Basic	17,910	25,390	32,730	35,980	7,480	18,080
Population-Serving	38,650	48,310	56,990	62,660	9,660	24,010

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

DN:LUTBLE.EC Pg 5



**Objective LU-14.2:** It is the County's objective that all new residential, commercial and industrial development within urban service area boundaries conform to urban standards, including connection to public water and sewerage systems, urban roadway frontage improvements, streetlights, and drainage.

**Objective LU-14.3:** It is the County's objective that new urban development within the urban service boundary of Santa Rosa not occur unless and until such lands are annexed by the City -- except where the South Santa Rosa and North Santa Rosa Specific Plans expressly allowed for such development as of 1986.

**ISSUE #2: Location of New Commercial, Industrial, and Public/Institutional Development**

As the center of the county's employment and services, the City of Santa Rosa and its vicinity will continue to attract a variety of commercial and industrial uses. Economic pressures to convert lands for urban uses along major transportation routes outside of the designated urban service area are likely to continue, resulting in competition with agricultural, scenic resource and open space for priority in use. Development of these types of intensive uses outside designated urban service boundaries could result in adverse effects on traffic, public services and groundwater quality.

**Objective LU-14.4:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan map provide sufficient lands within urban service boundaries to accommodate the needs for additional commercial, industrial, and public/quasi-public uses through year-2005 and that additional lands outside urban service boundaries not be authorized such uses.

**ISSUE #3: Extent of Future Rural Residential Land Use**

A significant amount of rural residential land use is accommodated in the Santa Rosa and Environs area, with the largest concentration located beyond the urban boundary southwest of Santa Rosa. "Pockets" of rural residential development are interspersed within predominantly agricultural areas in the west Santa Rosa plains and northern Sonoma Valley and Bennett Valley. "Pockets" of rural residential development also occur in the rugged north and east portions of the planning area, surrounded by environmentally constrained and often inaccessible open land. The economic pressure to convert additional lands to rural residential development is anticipated to remain strong in this planning area, due to the desirability of rural lifestyles by many households and the relatively close proximity of these rural lands to employment and services.

**Objective LU-14.5:** It is the County's objective that future rural residential development within the Santa Rosa planning area be limited to "in-fill" development within areas already designated for such use and that new concentrations of rural residential not occur.

TABLE LU-19:  
Santa Rosa and Environs: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

	Urban Service Areas				
Land-use Indicator	Larkfield/ Wikiup	Airport Industrial Area	Santa Rosa Expansion Area	Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
RESIDENTIAL					
No. of existing parcels (1985)	865	11	5,911	5,758	12,545
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	2,864	7	7,891	1,147	11,909
Total potential parcels (DUs)	3,729	18	13,802	6,905	24,454
Potential Population	9,419	45	34,864	17,443	61,771
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.87	---	---	0.63	---
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	15%	---	---	59%	---
COMMERCIAL					
No. of Parcels	65	0	118	12	195
Acreage	209 Ac.	0 Ac.	137.2 Ac.	161 Ac.	407.2 Ac.
INDUSTRIAL					
No. of Parcels	0	54	184	106	344
Acreage	0 Ac.	510 Ac.	940 Ac.	282 Ac.	1,732 Ac.
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS					
Resource-related					
No. of Parcels	---	---	---	1	1
Acreage				15 Ac.	15 Ac.
Recreation or Visitor Serving					
No. of Parcels	---	---	---	2	2
Acreage				259.1 Ac.	259.1 Ac.

#### **ISSUE #4: Natural Resource Management and Conservation in Hillside Areas**

The northeast (Mayacamas Mountain Range) and south-central (Sonoma Mountain Range) portions of the Santa Rosa planning area are characterized by generally rugged terrain, poor accessibility and low population density. With physical and environmental constraints constituting a severe hindrance to residential development, the conservation of watershed and biotic resources is a priority in these areas. A number of potential hard rock quarry sites, identified in the Aggregate Resources Management Plan, are located in these areas. Extraction of mineral resources on these preferred locations will require measures to protect scenic resources and mitigate environmental impacts.

**Objective LU-14.6:** It is the County's objective that the intensity of development remain very low within the portions of the Santa Rosa planning area which encompass the Sonoma and Mayacamas Mountains, in order to conserve these areas for their watershed, biotic, and mineral resource values.

#### **ISSUE #5: Preservation of Agricultural Lands in the Santa Rosa Plain**

A variety of agricultural uses are located around the periphery of the planning area. Vineyards predominate in the northwestern area from the County airport to Piner Road, in portions of the northern Sonoma and southern Bennett Valleys, and in isolated locations in the Knights Valley and Franz Valley areas. Grazing and dairy operations are found in the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Llano Road areas. Finally, an array of smaller intensive farms are interspersed throughout the remainder of these perimeter areas, particularly in the West Todd Road, West Santa Rosa, Bennett Valley, and the Warm Springs Road areas. Due to their proximity to urban Santa Rosa, and interspersed rural residential development, many of these lands will continue to experience economic pressure for further introduction of urban and rural residential uses.

**Objective LU-14.7:** It is the County's objective that lands designated for agricultural use on the land-use plan map for Santa Rosa and Environs not be converted to rural residential or to any commercial, industrial or other urban use, during the period to year-2005.

#### **ISSUE #6: Determination of appropriate land uses in the vicinity of airports**

The Santa Rosa planning area includes two general aviation facilities: 1) the Santa Rosa Air Center, a privately owned airport located within the sphere of influence of the City of Santa Rosa, and 2) the Sonoma County Airport, a County-owned facility federally licensed for passenger service. Land-use policies and individual development proposals in the vicinity of these airports must be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the safety and noise impacts of aviation activity.



**Objective LU-14.8:** It is the County's objective to provide long-term opportunities for public and private aviation activities at the Sonoma County Airport and that land-use policies establish the priority of aircraft operations in designated over-flight areas.

### **3.5.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE SANTA ROSA AND ENVIRONS REGION**

The following policies related to urban service boundaries and urban expansion areas in the Santa Rosa and Environs region shall be utilized by the County of Sonoma:

- LU-14a:** The Santa Rosa and Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup urban service boundaries encompass a sufficient quantity of land to accommodate the amount of growth projected through year-2005; proposals to expand the boundary to include additional lands shall not be approved unless it can be demonstrated that insufficient vacant lands remain to accommodate projected growth during the next five years.
- LU-14b:** Proposals to extend public water and/or sewer service beyond the Santa Rosa and Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup urban service area boundaries shall not be approved or considered consistent with this plan, unless findings are made by the appropriate decision-making body that: 1) the extension is to eliminate an existing health hazard due to failing septic systems or contaminated wells; 2) connections will be limited to existing structures with such failures; and 3) facilities will be sized so that capacities do not exceed that needed to accommodate the existing development. The preferred means of providing connection to these parcels shall be through out-of-service-area agreements rather than by annexation.
- LU-14c:** As a condition of approval of discretionary permits for development within the urban service boundary shown on the land-use plan maps, the county shall require full urban improvement standards -- including connection to public water and sewerage systems, urban roadway frontage improvements, streetlights, and drainage facilities. This requirement shall apply to all commercial and industrial development and to any residential development which exceeds one unit per acre.
- LU-14d:** Proposals to amend the land-use plan map within urban service area boundaries which would result in a higher intensity of development shall not be approved unless findings are made that sufficient unallocated capacities are available in public service systems, including roadways, to accommodate the proposed use and all planned uses without adversely affecting the level-of-service.

**LU-14e:** Joint city-county design review may be required for development projects which are located within unincorporated portions of the lands within the urban service boundary of the City of Santa Rosa.

**LU-14f:** Within the Roseland Redevelopment Project Area shown in Figure LU-7b, the following range of discretion may be used in applying and interpreting the land-use plan map when considering projects involving the Redevelopment Agency as a participant:

1. A parcel which is 8,000 square feet or smaller and contiguous (or separated by a public right-of-way) to another parcel which has a different commercial, public, or residential use category may be authorized the same use as any of the contiguous parcels in order to accomplish an integrated redevelopment project.
2. Public and quasi public uses, including public parking, may be authorized on any parcel or group of parcels whose combined size is 16,000 square feet or less.

Any necessary rezoning shall be processed concurrently with the appropriate development permit(s); applications for rezoning and/or a development permit shall not be determined to be complete until an administrative finding has been made by the Planning Director that the proposed project conforms to the intent of this policy.

**LU-14g:** Unless applicable specific plans in effect as of 1986 made provision for urban development within unincorporated portions of the urban expansion area of Santa Rosa, annexation to the city shall be required before urban development may proceed. Prior to annexation, a comprehensive environmental impact report and public service assessment should be prepared by the City of Santa Rosa to address urban development on any lands within its sphere of influence which are not designated for urban uses by its general plan as of 1986.

**LU-14h:** The land areas identified by the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan as "urban reserve" indicate those lands outside the urban service boundary which are preferred areas for city expansion in the long term; the intent is that these areas would be developed for urban use following their annexation by Santa Rosa. Prior to annexation, a comprehensive environmental impact report and public service assessment should be prepared by the City of Santa Rosa to address urban development on any lands within its sphere of influence which are not designated for urban uses by its general plan as of 1986.

The following policies of the County of Sonoma shall be applicable to commercial, industrial, and public-quasi public land uses within the Santa Rosa and Environs region:

**LU-14i:** The land-use plan map shall accommodate existing commercial, industrial, and public/quasi-public uses located outside urban service boundaries as of 1986; any expansions of such existing uses which may be authorized shall be limited so as to not necessitate extension of water and/or sewerage systems.

**LU-14j:** Proposals to amend the land-use plan map to include additional lands outside urban service area boundaries for commercial or industrial use, other than uses allowed by the recreation and visitor-serving overlay, shall not be approved.

The County of Sonoma shall utilize the following policies when considering discretionary permits or other development approvals for rural residential uses within the Santa Rosa and Environs region:

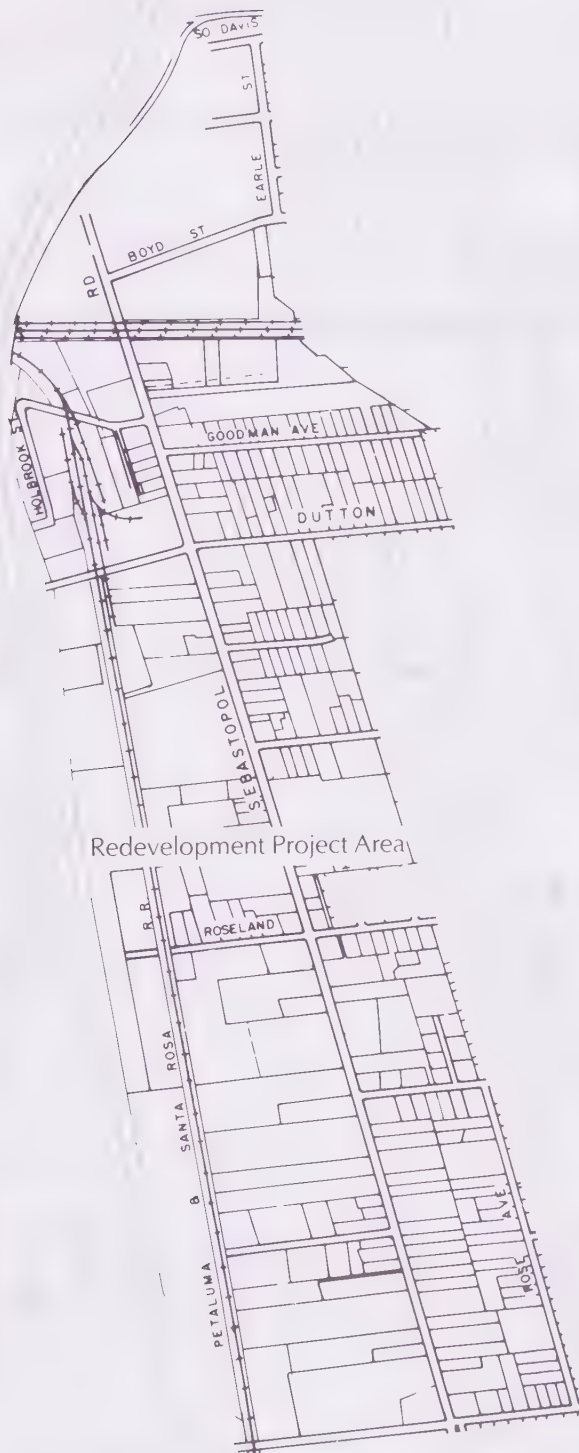
**LU-14k:** Rural residential development shall be limited to "in-fill" within areas designated for such use on the land-use plan map; proposals to expand or add new areas for rural residential development shall not be approved.

**LU-14l:** Lands within the urban service area boundary of Santa Rosa designated for "rural residential" shall be considered to comprise a holding zone for future urban development upon annexation to the city; densities permitted by the land-use plan map shall be near the lower end of the allowable range for rural residential, unless specific plans in effect as of 1986 provided otherwise.

**LU-14m:** Where rural residential lands border areas designated for agricultural use, the county shall require, as a condition of approval of any discretionary development permit, building setbacks and disclosure statements which will discourage potential nuisance complaints associated with normal and routine agricultural practices.

**LU-14n:** Limited public/quasi-public uses may be authorized in areas designated for rural residential use, provided that findings are made by the appropriate decision-making body that: 1) the proposed use is intended to serve a localized residential area and 2) provisions for access, traffic, and public health are acceptable.





Redevelopment Project Area



# ROSELAND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA LAND USE ELEMENT

The County of Sonoma shall utilize the following policies which are applicable to areas designated for natural resource-related use:

**LU-14o:** The "geothermal and mineral resource" use overlay shall be limited in the Santa Rosa and Environs region to those sites designated for hard rock quarry use in the Aggregate Resources Management Plan; any discretionary permits shall require visual screening of operations along the following scenic roadways: Calistoga Road, Highway 12, Mark West Springs Road, Petaluma Hill Road, and Porter Creek Road.

**LU-14p:** "The "resource-related commercial-industrial" overlay may be permitted for agricultural processing and services in areas along the following roadways: Todd Road, Hall Road, Olivet Road, Guerneville Road, Piner Road, Woolsey Road, Slusser Road, and Shiloh Road. Application of the overlay to parcels along scenic corridor routes shall not be approved unless the proposed use is located immediately adjacent to an existing agricultural processing, commercial, industrial or similar use.

The following County of Sonoma policies shall be applicable to lands located within the over-flight and approach protection zones of the Sonoma County airport, as such zones are designated in the Air Transportation Element of this plan:

**LU-14q:** The county shall apply the policies and standards of the Sonoma County Airport Land-use Commission (ALUC) in establishing the types and intensities of uses allowed within the designated area of impact of the Sonoma County Airport; any applicable standards of the ALUC shall be applied as conditions of approval of discretionary permits for development of structures within the ALUC zone of impact. This policy shall apply to the Santa Rosa Air Center unless and until that facility is closed to aviation.

**LU-14r:** An "airport impact area" zoning combining district shall be applied to all lands located within the ALUC referral area for the Sonoma County Airport and to the ALUC referral area for the Santa Rosa Air Center, unless and until it is closed to aviation.

### **3.6 SEBASTOPOL AND ENVIRONS**

#### **3.6.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Sebastopol planning area encompasses about 71 square miles and includes the City of Sebastopol, the small communities of Graton, Bloomfield and Valley Ford and surrounding rural areas. This region's land forms include the Merced Hills formation and consists of a series of hills and small valleys. The only large level portion of the planning area is along the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The distinct change in topography from the Santa Rosa Plain results in many scenic views of the Sonoma and Mayacamas Mountains to the east. Extensive areas of rural development have occurred in the past and are interspersed with small-scale farms and orchards. Although the region is known for its apple production, especially gravensteins, its agriculture has become increasingly diversified in recent years as apple production has declined due to abandonment and conversion of orchards. Most of the area drains into the Laguna or the Russian River, but drainage in the Bloomfield and Valley Ford areas flows south into tributaries of the Estero Americano.

The combined populations of Sebastopol and the three smaller communities were only 28 percent of the region's total in 1980. Most area residents live in single-family homes in rural residential areas which are intermixed with extensive apple orchards, animal husbandry and other agricultural activities. The area's economy is fairly well balanced, with about half of the 1980 employment in agriculture, manufacturing and other "basic" industries and half in retail trade and services to local residents. Many residents commute to work in Santa Rosa and other employment centers outside the Sebastopol planning area.

#### **3.6.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Projected population, households and housing units for the years 1990, 2000 and 2005 are shown in Table LU-20. Over the 25-year period from 1980 to 2005, area population is projected to increase by 4,700 people, an increase of about one-fifth. The projected annual compound growth rate of less than one percent is below the anticipated countywide rate. The projected population increase in the unincorporated portion of the region, exclusive of the city's expansion area, is about 500 people, or only ten percent of the total growth. The amount of employment located within the planning area, as shown in Table LU-21, is projected to increase by 39 percent between 1980 and 2005. This figure is somewhat larger than the projected population increase, indicating increased local employment opportunities for area residents and a possible decrease in the proportion of residents commuting to work outside the planning area. About two-thirds of new employment shown in Table LU-21 is projected to be in trade and services rather than agriculture or "basic" industries.

The land-use plan map for the Sebastopol and Environs region is presented in Figure LU-6f; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-22.



**TABLE LU-20:**  
**Sebastopol and Environs: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005**

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b><u>TOTAL POPULATION</u></b>						
Sebastopol and Environs	23,680	25,160	27,570	28,400	1,480	4,720
<b><u>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</u></b>						
Sebastopol (City)	5,595	7,000	9,300	10,100	1,405	4,505
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	18,085	18,160	18,270	18,300	75	215
City Expansion Areas	1,816	1,720	1,570	1,521	-95	-295
Communities	1,070	1,160	1,270	1,300	90	230
With Sewer Service						
Graton	880	950	1,020	1,050	70	170
Other Communities	190	210	250	250	20	60
Bloomfield	150	170	200	200	20	50
Valley Ford	40	40	50	50	0	10
Other Unincorporated	15,200	15,280	15,430	15,480	80	280
<b><u>HOUSEHOLDS</u></b>						
Population in Households	23,238	24,750	27,110	27,960	1,510	4,720
Average Household Size	2.65	2.57	2.52	2.49	-0.08	-0.16
Total Households	8,794	9,630	10,760	11,210	830	2,420
<b><u>HOUSING UNITS</u></b>						
Year-round	8,978	9,810	10,940	11,400	830	2,420
Seasonal / Occasional Use	299	300	300	300	0	0
Total Housing Units	9,277	10,110	11,240	11,700	830	2,420

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
 DN:LUTBLP.HH Pg 6

### 3.6.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### ISSUE #1: Urban Services and Community Development

The city of Sebastopol and unincorporated community of Graton are the only areas in the Sebastopol and Environs region with urban services. Due to existing development patterns, small parcel sizes and other constraints, not all lands in Sebastopol's urban service boundary are likely to be developed by year-2005 and some lands may be developed at less than the maximum permitted densities. Whether or not the City should extend services such as sewers and water mains into unincorporated areas, as it has done in the past, is an issue. Such service extensions promote increased interest in development of urban land uses but may reduce incentives for such properties to be annexed to the City and result in higher service costs for other governmental entities. The question of whether it is appropriate for the County to authorize and approve urban-type land-uses -- such as commercial or urban residential -- on lands in the City's urban expansion area is a related issue. Graton, which has a sewerage system administered by a County Service Area, does not have a public water system, which may be necessary to accommodate the planned amount of development. There are a number of vacant or underutilized structures in central Graton which could present possibilities for new uses, as well as a number of scattered vacant parcels which could be developed for residential use. The other two unincorporated communities in this planning area, Bloomfield and Valley Ford, are very small rural settlements. Issues pertain to determination of the amount of new development that would be compatible with the existing communities and with the requirements of individual wells and septic systems. The extent of visitor-serving uses which should be accommodated is also an issue, especially in Valley Ford.

**Objective LU-15.1:** It is the County's objective that the city of Sebastopol constitute the primary commercial and industrial center of western Sonoma County and that Graton comprise a second-order center.

**Objective LU-15.2:** It is the County's objective that the urban service area boundaries designated for Sebastopol and Graton encompass sufficient lands to accommodate growth projected through year 2005 and that the boundaries shown on the land-use plan map not be extended to encompass additional lands.

**Objective LU-15.3:** It is the County's objective that development of new commercial, industrial, and urban residential uses not be allowed on lands within the unincorporated portion of the Sebastopol urban service area unless and until such lands are annexed by the city.

**Objective LU-15.4:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan map and approvals of individual development permits in the Sebastopol and Environs planning region be correlated with the planned location and capacity of water and sewerage systems, roads, parks, and other public services.

TABLE LU-21:

Sebastopol and Environs: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	980	870	820	900	-110	-80
Centralized Manufacturing	170	220	300	350	50	180
Decentralized Manufacturing	1,210	1,350	1,490	1,570	140	360
Transportation / Utilities	60	70	70	80	10	20
Retail and Wholesale Trade	1,490	1,740	1,860	2,110	250	620
Construction	350	410	460	500	60	150
Services	1,360	1,590	1,920	2,080	230	720
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	240	290	350	400	50	160
Government	670	840	980	1,100	170	430
Total	6,530	7,390	8,250	9,090	860	2,560
Basic	3,160	3,430	3,730	4,060	270	900
Population-Serving	3,370	3,960	4,520	5,030	590	1,660

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.  
DN:LUTBLE.EC Pg 7



## **ISSUE #2: Development in the Gravenstein Highway Corridor**

State Highway 116, known as the Gravenstein Highway in the Sebastopol area, is the major north-south arterial in the area. Sebastopol, Graton and most of the area's commercial, industrial and higher density residential uses are located on or near this thoroughfare. Commercial uses along the highway are mostly within the Graton and Sebastopol urban service boundaries, but numerous businesses front on the highway elsewhere, particularly in a two-mile strip between Cooper Road and Hessel Road. County plans and zoning have limited highway oriented businesses to sites within urban service areas and existing commercial uses in order to minimize new access points and traffic generators. This objective is also consistent with the designation of Gravenstein Highway as a primary arterial and scenic highway and with the preservation of rural aesthetic values.

**Objective LU-15.5:** It is the County's objective that commercial and industrial uses within the unincorporated portions of the Highway 116 Corridor be limited to sites so designated as of 1986 and that no additional sites be authorized for commercial or industrial use.

**Objective LU-15.6:** It is the County's objective that any development authorized on commercially-designated lands in rural portions of the Sebastopol and Environs region be of a scale, intensity, and design which is compatible with the area's rural and scenic character.

## **ISSUE #3: Protection of Agricultural and Other Resource Lands**

The Sebastopol and Environs region encompasses diverse types of large- and small-scale agricultural uses and lands with various types of environmental or natural resources. The region is best-known for its production of apples -- although this agricultural sector has been declining over the last decade in terms of acres harvested and the value in constant dollars of its product. Issues pertain to a potential increase in economic pressures to convert orchards to other land uses, most likely to rural residential, and the possibility of increased conflicts of this development with remaining agricultural uses and practices. The issues include determination of the appropriate amount of additional homesites which may be created by subdivisions of rural and agricultural lands, whether new homesites should be clustered as small lots or if requirements for large parcel sizes should be retained, and determination of standards for new development which could reduce operational conflicts between adjacent agricultural and rural residential uses. The livestock and dairy farming operations in the southern one-third of the region have not yet experienced intrusion of rural residential uses, and issues pertain to appropriate means of preventing future problems which could result from this type of development. In addition to agricultural lands, the Sebastopol and Environs region encompasses several areas with important natural resources, including extensive wetlands along the

TABLE LU-22:  
Sebastopol and Environs: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas		Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
	Graton	Sebastopol Expansion Area		
RESIDENTIAL				
No. of existing parcels (1985)	305	606	5,858	6,769
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	163	17	478	658
Total potential parcels (DUs)	468	623	6,336	7,427
Potential Population	1,255	1,671	16,993	19,919
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.84	---	0.92	0.92
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	20%	---	8%	8%
COMMERCIAL				
No. of Parcels	13	8	67	88
Acreage	5 Ac.	9 Ac.	135 Ac.	149 Ac.
INDUSTRIAL				
No. of Parcels	22	5	2	29
Acreage	15 Ac.	9 Ac.	8	32
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS				
Resource-related				
No. of Parcels	---	---	7	7
Acreage	---	---	62	62
Recreation or Visitor Serving				
No. of Parcels	---	---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---	---

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
DN:LUTBLS.PD Pg 6

Laguna de Santa Rosa and the Estero Americano and riparian corridors along Atascadero and Blucher Creeks. Extensive portions of the region have unproven groundwater resources and/or hillsides with slopes in excess of 30 percent. Issues include the intensity of rural development which could be allowed in areas with resource value or physical constraints without exceeding the carrying capacities of the land and public facilities.

**Objective LU-15.7:** It is the County's objective that lands in the Sebastopol and Environs region which are designated for agricultural uses not be converted to non-agricultural uses and that any development authorized by the land-use plan map be compatible with preservation of agricultural lands and agricultural production.

**Objective LU-15.8:** It is the County's objective that development not be allowed which would adversely affect the natural vegetation, wildlife habitat or rare or endangered species in the designated wetlands and riparian areas along the Laguna de Santa Rosa, Estero Americano, Atascadero Creek and Blucher Creek.

**Objective LU-15.9:** It is the County's objective that development in the rural portions of the Sebastopol and Environs region be limited and designed in a manner which conserves groundwater, soil resources and conifer forests to the maximum extent feasible.

### **3.6.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE SEBASTOPOL AND ENVIRONS REGION**

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to the location of urban service area boundaries:

**LU-15a:** The urban service area boundaries for Sebastopol and Graton are intended to encompass sufficient lands to accommodate the amount of growth projected through year-2005; proposals to include additional lands within an urban service boundary shall not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:

1. Vacant lands within current boundaries will accommodate no more than five years of planned growth.
2. The City of Sebastopol (or the Graton County Service Area) has sufficient unallocated service capacities to accommodate the additional lands and development without adversely affecting the level of service to existing and future users.
3. Natural resources and agricultural production would not be significantly affected by urban development in the area proposed to be added to the urban service area.



**LU-15b:** Prior to development of a public water system for Graton, the Planning and Public Works Departments shall prepare a study which re-evaluates the location of the urban service area boundary for Graton; any proposed change shall require an amendment of the land-use plan map. The urban service area boundary shall not be expanded west of Atascadero Creek or east of Gravenstein Highway.

The following County policies are applicable to commercial and industrial uses in the Sebastopol and Environs Region:

**LU-15c:** The "general commercial" and "general industrial" land-use categories shall not be applied to any lands located outside the boundaries of the Sebastopol and Graton urban service areas.

**LU-15d:** Vacant sites or sites with vacant buildings east of Bowen Street in Graton may be redesignated from commercial/industrial use to urban residential use if surrounding areas, water resources and service levels are not adversely affected; any such change shall require an amendment of the land-use plan map.

**LU-15e:** Approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary planning permit for commercial or industrial development within an urban service boundary shall be granted only upon written certification by the applicable service agency that it can meet existing commitments and provide services to the new project.

**LU-15f:** Designations of "limited commercial" and "limited industrial" lands outside of the Sebastopol and Graton urban service areas shall be restricted to sites designated for such use by the applicable specific plans as of 1986; no new sites shall be approved for these uses.

**LU-15g:** On lands designated as "limited commercial", the following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body in order to approve any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit, including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the commercial service needs of local area residents or the local agricultural community.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.

4. If the proposed use is located on a site within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts will be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

**LU-15h:** On lands designated as "limited industrial", the following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body in order to approve any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the service, employment or agricultural processing needs of the planning area.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. If the proposed use is on a site within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts will be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

The following County policies are applicable to agricultural and resource-related uses in the Sebastopol and Environs region:

**LU-15i:** Improved campgrounds and guest ranches may be permitted on lands within the resource designations through an amendment of the land-use plan map to a "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" overlay. Approval of any amendment for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The proposed use will be of a size, scale, and desing which is appropriate for and compatible with the rural, natural, and scenic qualities of the local area.
2. Service capacities are adequate to accommodate the proposed use and the level of service will not be adversely affected.
3. The proposed location will not result in an excessive concentration of such uses in a manner which would degrade the quality of any natural resource.

**LU-15j:** Large-scale agricultural processing and services shall require a land-use overlay of resource-related commercial-industrial and shall be limited to locations which are within a quarter-mile of an arterial or collector highway.

- LU-15k:** Designation of building envelopes which provide a 100 foot setback from any adjacent agricultural production shall be required for subdivision of lands which are designated "diverse agriculture" or adjacent thereto.
- LU-15l:** Additional residential density shall not be authorized for lands designated within the agricultural and natural resource categories; designations of agricultural and natural resource lands shall not be amended to other use categories.



## **3.7 ROHNERT PARK - COTATI AND ENVIRONS**

### **3.7.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Rohnert Park-Cotati planning area is located in south central Sonoma County along the Highway 101 corridor between Santa Rosa and Petaluma. The region encompasses the cities of Rohnert Park and Cotati and surrounding unincorporated areas, the community of Penngrove and the west flank of Sonoma Mountain. Landforms vary from the level Santa Rosa/Cotati Plain to rolling hills near Penngrove and south of Cotati to the steep foothills of Sonoma Mountain. Sonoma Mountain is the area's most prominent visual feature and forms a continuous backdrop visible from throughout this planning region. The mountain's steep slopes also result in very rapid runoff of stormwater during major rainfall events to the valley floor below and to the Petaluma River and Laguna de Santa Rosa drainage systems.

The Rohnert Park-Cotati area has the smallest land area of the nine sub-county planning regions, but the average population density is the highest. The area also has the highest proportion of its population within incorporated cities, 95 percent in 1980. The only unincorporated settlement with a community water and sewer system is Penngrove. Extensive rural residential development is located south and west of Cotati, around Penngrove and in several small clusters in the Sonoma Mountain foothills.

Most of the area's employment is in retail sales and services in Rohnert Park and Cotati. The largest individual employers in the area are Hewlett-Packard, State Farm Insurance, Pacific Bell, and Sonoma State University, all located on the east side of Rohnert Park. Because of the area's accessible location on Highway 101, many area residents commute to work in Santa Rosa, Petaluma and the Bay Area. Livestock grazing and forage crops are the predominant type of agriculture in the rural portion of the region.

### **3.7.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Projected population, households and housing units for the years 1990, 2000 and 2005 are shown in Table LU-23. Over the 25-year period from 1980 to 2005, area population is projected to increase by 23,310 people, a 72 percent increase or an average compound growth rate of 2.2 percent per year. However, the projected population increase in the unincorporated portions of the Rohnert Park-Cotati planning area, including Penngrove, is only 1,200 people by year-2005. The amount of employment located within the planning area, shown in Table LU-24, is projected to increase over 100 percent between 1980 and 2005. This figure is significantly larger than the 72 percent projected population increase, indicating increased local employment opportunities for area residents and a possible decrease in the proportion of residents commuting to work outside of the planning area. Over 70 percent of new employment is projected to be in retail trade, construction, government, utilities and other services rather than in manufacturing, agriculture or other basic industries.

TABLE LU-23

Rohnert Park - Cotati and Environs: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>						
Rohnert Park-Cotati & Environs	32,190	42,100	51,000	55,500	9,910	23,310
<b>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</b>						
Cotati (City)	3,475	4,600	6,200	6,700	1,120	3,220
Rohnert Park (City)	22,965	31,500	38,300	42,200	8,540	19,240
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	5,750	6,000	6,500	6,600	250	850
Cotati City Expansion Areas	758	630	480	430	-130	-330
Rohnert Park City Expansion Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communities						
With Sewer Service						
Penngrove	800	900	1,300	1,400	100	600
Other Unincorporated	4,192	4,470	4,720	4,770	280	580
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
Population in Households	31,723	41,530	50,350	54,790	9,810	23,070
Average Household Size	2.71	2.64	2.62	2.59	-0.07	-0.12
Total Households	11,621	15,730	19,240	21,120	4,110	9,500
<b>HOUSING UNITS</b>						
Year-round	12,133	16,240	19,750	21,640	4,110	9,500
Seasonal / Occasional Use	118	120	120	120	0	0
Total Housing Units	12,251	16,360	19,870	21,760	4,110	9,500

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986  
 DN:LUTBLP.HH Pg 7

The land-use plan map for the Rohnert Park - Cotati and Environs region is presented in Figure LU-6g; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-25.

### 3.7.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### **ISSUE #1: Urban Services and Community Development**

The Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs region includes the urban service areas of the two cities and the Penngrove County Service Area. About 80 percent of the planning area's projected growth from 1980 to 2005 is allocated to the city of Rohnert Park, and potential expansion of its boundaries is a major planning issue. It is not clear that sufficient lands are designated for future residential development within Rohnert Park's boundaries to accommodate the projected population growth, and substantial areas planned for future commercial and industrial growth could further increase housing demand. Significant costs and environmental impacts could be associated with any of several potential areas for future expansion of the city. Issues also include determination of the types and intensities of land uses which should be allowed by the County on lands immediately surrounding Rohnert Park. Issues related to future expansion of the smaller city of Cotati also pertain to determination of the appropriate locations for its year-2005 urban service boundary and the means by which the rural and small-town character desired by many of its residents could be maintained. Most issues related to the future development of Penngrove were resolved by the Penngrove Specific Plan adopted in 1984; the major unresolved question pertains to the need to upgrade the water system and the effect on future development if improvements required by the State Health Department are not undertaken.

**Objective LU-16.1:** It is the County's objective that the urban service area boundaries designated for Rohnert-Park, Cotati, and Penngrove encompass sufficient lands to accommodate growth projected through year-2005 and that the boundaries not be extended to encompass additional lands.

**Objective LU-16.2:** It is the County's objective that any proposal to expand the urban service area to include additional lands within the LAFCO spheres of influence for Rohnert Park and Cotati be evaluated to assess the environmental effects of any proposed future urban land-uses.

**Objective LU-16.3:** It is the County's objective that new urban residential, commercial, or industrial uses not be allowed on lands within the unincorporated portions of the Rohnert Park and Cotati urban service areas unless and until such lands are annexed by the appropriate city.



TABLE LU-24:

Rohnert Park - cotati and Environs: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	130	120	120	130	-10	0
Centralized Manufacturing	380	760	1,160	1,270	380	890
Decentralized Manufacturing	450	650	800	880	200	430
Transportation / Utilities	530	800	960	1,050	270	520
Retail and Wholesale Trade	1,770	2,770	3,440	3,780	1,000	2,010
Construction	870	1,380	1,720	1,890	510	1,020
Services	3,070	3,870	4,680	5,150	800	2,080
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	150	240	350	380	90	230
Government	1,670	2,580	3,360	3,690	910	2,020
Total	9,020	13,160	16,580	18,220	4,140	9,200
Basic	3,530	4,520	5,470	6,010	990	2,480
Population-Serving	5,490	8,640	11,110	12,210	3,150	6,720

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.  
DN:LUTBLE.EC Pg 7

**Objective LU-16.4:** It is the County's objective that new commercial and industrial development in the Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs region be restricted to locations in the cities and the urban service area of Penngrove.

**Objective LU-16.5:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan map and approvals of individual development permits in the Rohnert Park-Cotati planning region be correlated with the planned location and capacity of water and sewerage systems, roads, parks and other public services.

### **ISSUE #2: Intensity of Development in Community Separator Open Space Areas**

Due to the rapid growth and size of the Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Petaluma urban areas, maintaining community separators between them has long been an issue of concern to many residents. Policies of the county and the City of Rohnert Park designate a buffer of agricultural and rural residential uses between its north boundary and the city of Santa Rosa. Economic pressures to extend the South Santa Rosa Avenue commercial-industrial strip further south could occur, but the greatest potential intrusion into the separator is commercial and industrial development on land annexed to the City of Rohnert Park west of Highway 101. Development within the north boundary of the City has been designed to support the separator concept by making it difficult to extend utilities and streets further north. Meachem Hill, a large undeveloped ridge south of Cotati, provides a distinct physical barrier and visual break between the Rohnert Park-Cotati urban area and the Petaluma urban area. Due to physical constraints and open space easements in effect on several parcels, development pressures are not likely to be as great in this community separator area.

**Objective LU-16.6:** It is the County's objective that commercial and industrial uses and residential uses with a density greater than one unit per ten acres be prohibited on lands in the Meachem Hill and North Rohnert Park community separator areas designated in the Open Space Element.

### **ISSUE #3: Protection of Agricultural and Other Resource Lands**

Agricultural Lands in the Rohnert Park-Cotati region are primarily used for livestock grazing or the production of livestock feed crops, with some vegetable and nursery crops found near Petaluma Hill Road. Conflicts between urban and agricultural uses could occur around the perimeter of Rohnert Park, where there is land speculation due to uncertainty about potential expansion of the city in the future. Areas with significant agricultural production could also be affected by further rural residential development west of Cotati and east of Rohnert Park. The types of agriculture found in the planning area require very few residences and extensive land areas. Several streams and

TABLE LU-25:  
Rohnert Park - Cotati and Environs: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas				Unincorporated Area Total
	Penngrove	Cotati Expansion Area	Rohnert Park Expansion Area	Rural Area	
RESIDENTIAL					
No. of existing parcels (1985)	226	170	0	2,011	2,407
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	366	50	0	494	910
Total potential parcels (DUs)	592	220	0	2,505	3,317
Potential Population	1,508	560	0	6,380	8,448
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.92	---	---	0.75	---
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	8%	---	---	34%	---
COMMERCIAL					
No. of Parcels	29	2	0	10	41
Acreage	23 Ac.	13 Ac.	0 Ac.	13 Ac.	49 Ac.
INDUSTRIAL					
No. of Parcels	13	0	0	15	28
Acreage	24 Ac.	0 Ac.	0 Ac.	26 Ac.	50 Ac.
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS					
Resource-related					
No. of Parcels	0	0	0	1	1
Acreage	0	0	0	5 Ac.	5 Ac.
Recreation or Visitor Serving					
No. of Parcels	0	0	0	0	0
Acreage	0	0	0	0	0



Wetland areas present important resource conservation and safety issues. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is a significant wildlife habitat, and adjacent areas have a high water table and drainage problems. Winter flooding is a significant hazard in the Laguna area, along small streams east of Rohnert Park and along branches of the Petaluma River in the Penngrove area. Several environmental resources of the Sonoma Mountain area are of special concern, including Crane Creek Park and the Fairfield Osborn Preserve, a 149-acre natural area owned by the Nature Conservancy. The location and design of development is limited by State guidelines within a 2,000-foot wide special studies zone centered on the Rodgers Creek Fault, a known active fault running northwest-southeast through the Sonoma Mountain foothills. Two small areas in the foothills have been determined to be "archaeologically sensitive," indicating some evidence of prehistoric occupation by Native Americans. Areas of steeper slopes are considered to have a high potential for wildland fires, erosion and landslides. The Sonoma Mountain area also comprises most of the watershed for the ground water resources tapped by the City of Rohnert Park's well system.

**Objective LU-16.7:** It is the County's objective that lands in the Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs region which are designated for agricultural uses not be converted to non-agricultural uses and that any development authorized by the land-use plan map be compatible with preservation of agricultural lands and agricultural production.

**Objective LU-16.8:** It is the County's objective that development not be allowed which would adversely affect natural vegetation, wildlife habitat or rare or endangered species in the designated wetlands and riparian areas along the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

**Objective LU-16.9:** It is the County's objective that any development in the Rohnert Park-Cotati region authorized by the land-use plan maps within designated natural resource areas be of very low density and be accomplished in a manner which conserves and protects the resource to the maximum extent practicable.

### **3.7.4 LAND-USE POLICIES APPLICABLE TO THE ROHNERT PARK-COTATI AND ENVIRONS REGION**

The following County policies are applicable to the location of urban service area boundaries:

**LU-16a:** The urban service area boundaries for Rohnert Park and Cotati are intended to encompass sufficient lands to accommodate the amount of growth projected through year-2005; proposals to change the boundary to include additional lands shall not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:

1. Vacant lands within current boundaries will accommodate no more than five years of planned growth.
2. The applicable service entities have sufficient unallocated capacities to accommodate the additional lands and development without adversely affecting the level of service to existing and future users.
3. Natural resources and agricultural production would not be significantly affected by urban development in the area proposed to be added to the urban service area.

**LU-16b:** Additional lands shall not be annexed into the Penngrove County Service Area, except for developed contiguous parcels with demonstrated failure of septic systems; connection of these parcels to public sewer and/or water systems shall not be a basis for greater residential densities and development on these parcels.

The following policies of the county are applicable to commercial and industrial uses:

**LU-16c:** The "general commercial" and "general industrial" land-use categories shall not be applied to any lands located outside the boundaries of the Penngrove urban service area.

**LU-16d:** The "limited commercial" and "limited industrial" use categories shall be limited to lands in the Penngrove urban service and to sites designated for such use by the applicable specific plans in effect as of 1986.

**LU-16e:** On lands designated as "limited commercial", the following findings shall be required to be made by the appropriate decision-making body in order to approve any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit, including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the commercial service needs of local area residents or the agricultural community.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. If the proposed use is located within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts can be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

**LU-16f:** On lands designated as "limited industrial," the following findings shall be required to be made by the appropriate decision-making body in order to approve any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit, including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the service, employment or agricultural processing needs of the planning area.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. If the proposed use is located within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts can be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

The following policies are applicable to lands designated for agricultural uses and resource-related uses:

**LU-16g:** Large-scale agricultural processing and services shall be limited to locations within one-half mile of Gravenstein Highway or Petaluma Hill Road and any parcel authorized for such use shall require the resource-related commercial-industrial overlay.

**LU-16h:** Small campgrounds or guest ranches may be allowed on lands designated for agricultural uses through an amendment of the land-use plan map to the "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" overlay; approval of any amendment for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The proposed use is secondary to and compatible with the basic agricultural use of the property.
2. The use does not adversely affect adjacent agricultural or resource lands.
3. The use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on roadways.
4. Adequate water and police and fire protection services are available.

**LU-16i:** Building envelopes shall be required to be established for subdivisions of lands which are in a designated natural resource or open space area, including portions of Sonoma Mountain and the Laguna de Santa Rosa; these envelopes shall be established in a manner which conserves and protects the resource to the maximum extent practicable.



- LU-16j:** Approvals of discretionary development permits shall be conditioned in a manner which would minimize potential adverse impacts on erosion, wildlife, visual quality, Crane Creek Park, and the Fairfield-Osborn Preserve.
- LU-16k:** Lands in the Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs region which are designated for agricultural uses and resource related uses shall not be amended to the rural residential use category.

## **3.8 PETALUMA AND ENVIRONS**

### **3.8.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Petaluma planning area encompasses 149 square miles in the southwest portion of the county, extending from the Roblar-Stony Point-Old Redwood Highway road alignments south to the Sonoma-Marin county line and east to the crest of the Sonoma Mountains. Dominant natural features include the Sonoma Mountains, the rolling hills that provide a scenic backdrop for the City of Petaluma and form the topography of the eastern portion of the planning area, and the Petaluma River and marshes. The mild climate and location of the planning area in relation to the Bay Area have made it a historic center of production for poultry and dairy products. Although the poultry industry has declined in recent years, as of 1986 milk remained the county's leading agricultural commodity. Sonoma County is now the eighth largest milk-producing county in the state, producing enough to satisfy local demand and supply 21 percent of dairy product needs in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

The planning area's population of 44,520 in 1980 was concentrated in the City of Petaluma (33,834) and in rural residential areas adjoining the city limits to the south, west and northwest. The balance of the area's population was scattered in agricultural areas at very low densities. Although agriculture -- particularly dairies -- remains an important part of the local economy, the Petaluma area leads other planning areas in terms of its share of financial, communications and business services employment and ranks second in personal services employment. This is reflective of activity in the City of Petaluma central business district and recent industrial development east of Highway 101. However, the area's proximity to Marin and San Francisco, combined with the central location of the Highway 101 corridor within the planning area, results in a daily outcommute of over 40 percent of the area's workforce. As in other planning areas, Petaluma experienced a high rate of population growth during the 1970's -- an effective average annual growth rate of 2.8 percent per year. Rapid growth and in-migration are reflected by the relatively high proportion (27 percent) of 1980 population over five years of age that resided outside the planning area in 1975.

### **3.8.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Projected population and household growth through year-2005 and estimates of housing production needs are shown in Table LU-26; the land-use plan provides a potential for more than a sufficient number of building sites in unincorporated portions of the planning area to accommodate projected housing needs through year-2005. Projected changes in employment by major industry groups are presented in Table LU-27; employment projections reflect jobs located in the planning area, regardless of workers' places of residence. Between 1980 and 2005, the population of the area is expected to increase by 56 percent to

**TABLE LU-26:**  
**Petaluma and Environs: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005**

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b><u>TOTAL POPULATION</u></b>						
Petaluma and Environs	44,520	54,530	64,570	69,500	10,100	24,980
<b><u>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</u></b>						
Petaluma (City)	33,834	43,800	53,800	58,700	9,970	24,890
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	10,686	10,730	10,770	10,800	40	110
City Expansion Areas	3,925	3,440	2,840	2,440	-490	-1,490
Other Unincorporated	6,761	7,290	7,930	8,360	530	1,600
<b><u>HOUSEHOLDS</u></b>						
Population in Households	43,595	53,470	63,390	68,220	24,630	24,630
Average Household Size	2.75	2.68	2.66	2.64	-0.07	-0.11
Total Households	15,652	19,940	23,860	25,900	4,290	10,240
<b><u>HOUSING UNITS</u></b>						
Year-round	15,982	20,270	24,190	26,230	4,350	10,240
Seasonal / Occasional Use	218	220	220	220	0	0
Total Housing Units	16,200	20,490	24,550	26,620	4,350	10,420

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986  
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0,500; this results in an effective annual growth rate of 1.8 percent, about the same as projected for the county as a whole. Local jobs are predicted to increase by just over 100 percent - from 11,650 to 23,480. The major share of population growth is expected to occur in the City of Petaluma; given the small quantities of commercial and industrial lands in unincorporated portions of the planning area, the same situation is expected for employment growth.

The land-use plan map for the Petaluma and Environs region is presented in Figure LU-6h; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-28.

### 8.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### ISSUE #1: Urban Service Boundary

Within the Petaluma and Environs region, urban residential development and most commercial and industrial development is located within the City of Petaluma's urban service boundary, where both public water and sewer services are available. The sole provider of wastewater management services in the planning area is the City of Petaluma, which operates its own sewage treatment facility and water system. Services are provided within city limits and to designated areas outside the city, including the unincorporated community of Penngrove in the Rohnert Park-Cotati planning area. The principal urban service issue in the Petaluma planning area is the ability of existing sewage treatment and water facilities to serve projected growth within planned service areas; secondary concerns include the potential for expansion of the existing sewer service area and the long-term adequacy of treatment facilities. Inasmuch as the county is dependent on Petaluma as a service provider, it is clear that the city has the lead role in determining the location and timing of service extensions to lands within its sphere of influence. At the same time, a cooperative city/county effort is needed to ensure a smooth transition from rural to urban uses within the sphere, while protecting the rural character of adjoining unincorporated areas.

**Objective LU-17.1:** It is the County's objective that urban residential development in the Petaluma planning area be restricted to parcels within the urban service boundary of the City of Petaluma and that such development not occur until annexation by the City.

**Objective LU-17.2:** It is the County's objective that the urban service boundary shown on the land-use plan map for the City of Petaluma contain sufficient lands to accommodate projected residential, commercial, and industrial growth through year-2005, and that the boundary not be extended to encompass additional lands.

#### ISSUE #2: Agriculture and Rural Development

The Petaluma area's role as a leading producer of milk and dairy products is attributable to the area's productive agricultural soils, mild climate, rolling (often steeply sloped) topography -- which has discouraged urban sprawl -- and its close proximity to Bay Area markets. There are two distinct

TABLE LU-27:

Petaluma and Environs: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	650	630	590	640	-20	-10
Centralized Manufacturing	630	1,010	1,330	1,460	390	830
Decentralized Manufacturing	580	880	1,050	1,180	310	600
Transportation / Utilities	860	1,090	1,320	1,440	240	590
Retail and Wholesale Trade	3,860	5,520	7,230	7,970	1,660	4,110
Construction	620	900	1,280	1,460	280	840
Services	2,370	3,480	4,570	5,070	1,110	2,700
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	550	740	1,030	1,130	180	570
Government	1,530	2,100	2,840	3,130	580	1,600
Total	11,650	16,360	21,250	23,480	4,710	11,830
Basic	3,740	4,940	5,660	6,250	1,200	2,510
Population-Serving	7,910	11,420	15,890	17,230	3,520	9,320

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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It interrelated threats to agriculture in the Petaluma area: fluctuating markets for the dairy and livestock industry and the subdivision of large agricultural parcels into residential lots -- often in response to adverse conditions in the farm economy. Extensive areas of rural residential development exist on the periphery of the City of Petaluma to the south, west and northwest, and potentially threaten agricultural operations by creating land-use conflicts (such as noise and odors and by exerting upward pressure on agricultural land values based on speculation regarding the possibility of non-agricultural development in the future). Many residents have expressed a preference for protecting remaining agricultural lands, although issues remain regarding appropriate policies for residential densities in agricultural areas.

**Objective LU-17.3:** It is the County's objective that productive dairy, livestock grazing and forage crop lands in the Petaluma and Environs region not be converted to non-agricultural uses and that intrusion of residential and commercial uses not related to agriculture be kept to a minimum.

**Objective LU-17.4:** It is the County's objective that a limited number of agricultural services and large-scale agricultural processing facilities be authorized in agricultural areas near Petaluma so as to increase the accessibility and convenience of such supporting activities to agricultural producers.

### **ISSUE #3: Commercial-Industrial Development**

Most commercial and industrial development in the Petaluma and Environs region is located in the City of Petaluma; exceptions are the east side of Old Redwood Highway north of the city, on both sides of Highway 101 south of the city, and scattered sites along Bodega Highway west of the city. Since intensive commercial or industrial development requires urban services, and since needs for local-serving commercial-industrial land have already been accommodated, the intent of the general plan is to limit sites for future commercial-industrial development to lands within the Petaluma urban service boundary.

**Objective LU-17.5:** It is the County's objective that Petaluma comprise the commercial and industrial center for the southwestern Sonoma County area and that commercial uses be restricted to locations within its urban service boundary and to those uses in other areas which were existing or authorized by specific plans as of 1986.

### **ISSUE #4: Recreation Resources**

The Petaluma planning area contains two principal recreational resources:

Petaluma River - The river has been a navigable waterway since the Petaluma area was first settled in the 1850s. Commercial use of the waterway began in 1851 and continued through 1950; during this period the river was the principal means of transporting the county's agricultural



TABLE LU-28:  
Petaluma and Environs: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas	Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
	Petaluma Expansion Area		
RESIDENTIAL			
No. of existing parcels (1985)	555	2,752	3,307
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	396	1,033	1,429
Total potential parcels (DUs)	951	3,785	4,736
Potential Population	2,576	10,254	12,830
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	---	0.82	---
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	---	23%	---
COMMERCIAL			
No. of Parcels	46	31	77
Acreage	54 Ac.	936 Ac.	990 Ac.
INDUSTRIAL			
No. of Parcels	3	---	3
Acreage	69 Ac.	---	69
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS			
Resource-related			
No. of Parcels	---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---
Recreation or Visitor Serving			
No. of Parcels	---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---

products to San Francisco. Today, the river is a recreational waterway, with activity focused at the Port Sonoma Marina located south of the Highway 37 bridge. When completed, this facility will house 440 recreational vessels, a restaurant and related marine businesses.

Sears Point Raceway - consists of a road racing track, a performance driving school, and accessory garage and office facilities, situated at the southeastern edge of the planning area north of Highway 37. The raceway also includes camping and recreational vehicle facilities for use by race participants; these facilities are not available for use by the public.

Due to the scale of these existing uses and the accessibility of the San Pablo bay front corridor to the greater San Francisco Bay region, economic pressures are likely to occur for additional visitor-serving commercial uses in this area. Such uses could conflict with agricultural operations and would be incompatible with the scenic rural character of the area.

Objective LU-17.6: It is the County's objective that recreation and visitor-serving uses in rural areas be limited to those existing or approved as of 1986 and that no new uses of this type occur in agricultural areas, except for such small-scale uses as may be ancillary to and supportive of on-site agricultural production.

## **ISSUE 5: Natural Resource Conservation**

In addition to agricultural resources, the Petaluma planning area includes the Petaluma River; a portion of the county's San Pablo bayfront, together with associated estuarine and tidal marshland; and many creeks with associated riparian habitats. These areas provide habitats for many native plant and animal species, including several rare or endangered species. Mineral resources exist at the Petaluma Quarry site, located east of Highway 101, south of the Petaluma River. For most of these natural resources, the principal issue involves the intensity and design appropriate for any future development so that resources are conserved; for mineral resources, issues pertain to mitigation of visual and environmental impacts.

Objective LU-17.7: It is the County's objective that commercial or industrial development not occur on any lands in the Petaluma and Environs region which contain important natural resources and that residential densities not exceed one unit per 60 acres on these lands.

### **3.8.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE PETALUMA AND ENVIRONS REGION**

The following policies of the County of Sonoma apply to urban service boundaries for the City of Petaluma and uses allowed on lands located therein prior to their annexation:

- LU-17a:** Except for adjustments to correspond to parcel boundaries and/or the City's revised 1986 General Plan, the Petaluma urban service boundary conforms to the LAFCo sphere of influence in effect as of 1986; it is the County's policy that the LAFCo sphere of influence include lands located south of the city along Petaluma Boulevard which are designated for industrial use.
- LU-17b:** The ultimate boundary for Petaluma should not be extended eastward as far as Adobe Road; parcels in this area shall be retained in large sizes to the extent practicable so as to maintain a transition between urban uses in the city and agricultural lands on the slopes of Sonoma Mountain.
- LU-17c:** Development permits for new urban land-uses shall not be approved for any unincorporated land areas within the Petaluma urban service boundary prior to annexation by the City of Petaluma. Such uses shall be limited to those existing as of 1986.
- LU-17d:** All applications for discretionary development permits on lands within one mile of the urban service boundary of Petaluma shall be referred to the City for review and comment prior to action by the appropriate decision-making body.

The following policies of the County are applicable to agricultural lands in the Petaluma and Environs region:

- LU-17e:** Proposals to increase the permitted residential density shall not be approved for lands which are designated for agricultural production, nor shall proposals be approved to change the use classification to rural residential use.
- LU-17f:** On lands designated for grazing and forage crop production, limited agricultural services and large-scale agricultural processing facilities may be authorized; such uses shall require the "resource-related commercial-industrial" overlay.

The County shall utilize the following policies related to commercial and industrial development:

- LU-17g:** The "general commercial" and "general industrial" use categories shall not be applied to any lands located outside the urban service boundary of Petaluma; within that boundary, such designations shall be limited to those uses existing as of 1986 and no new sites shall be approved.
- LU-17h:** Designations of lands for "limited commercial" or "limited industrial" uses in the Petaluma and Environs region shall be restricted to sites devoted to such uses as of 1986; no new sites shall be approved for these uses.



**LU-17i:** On lands designated "limited commercial", the following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of any quasi-judicial discretionary permit, including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the commercial service needs of local area residents or the local agricultural community.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. If the proposed use is located on a site within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts can be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

**LU-17j:** On lands designated as "limited industrial," the following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body in order to approve any quasi-judicial discretionary development permit including but not limited to use permits and design review:

1. The proposed use specifically serves the service, employment or agricultural processing needs of the planning area.
2. The proposed use incorporates mitigations which make it compatible with adjacent residential or agricultural uses.
3. The proposed use can be accommodated without adversely affecting the level of service on public roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
4. If the proposed use is within a designated scenic corridor, visual impacts can be mitigated through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and/or screening.

**LU-17k:** On lands designated as "recreation and visitor-serving commercial," specifically the parcels comprising Port Sonoma and Sears Point Raceway, the types and intensities of uses shall be restricted to those existing or authorized by development permit as of 1986; development of permanent lodging facilities shall be specifically prohibited.

e following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to lands signated for natural resource uses in the Petaluma and Environs region:

**LU-171:** Small-scale guest ranches may be permitted on lands within the resource designations through an amendment of the land-use plan map to a "recreation and visitor-serving commercial" overlay. Approval of any amendment for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The proposed use will be of a size, scale, and intensity which is appropriate for and compatible with the character of the local community.
2. Service capacities are adequate to accommodate the proposed use and the level of service will not be adversely affected.
3. The proposed location will not result in an excessive concentration of such uses in a manner which would degrade the quality of any natural resource.
4. The design of the proposed use is in harmony with the rural, natural and scenic qualities of the local area.

**LU-17a:** Additional residential density shall not be authorized for any land area designated within a natural resource category nor shall proposals to change the use classification to another category be approved.

## 9 SONOMA VALLEY

### 9.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Sonoma Valley planning area encompasses about 147 square miles in southeastern Sonoma County, extending from the eastern portion of Bennett Valley and Kenwood south to San Pablo Bay and from the crest of the Sonoma Mountains east to the Sonoma-Napa county line. Dominant natural features include the Sonoma and Mayacamas Mountains which enclose Bennett Valley and the Valley of the Moon, two valleys especially noted for their scenic landscapes. The prime agricultural soils, moderate climate and generous annual rainfall combine to rank valley and foothill portions of the Sonoma Valley region among the finest vineyard regions in the world. The mountains and associated foothills and valleys give way to alluvial plains, estuaries, and tidal marshlands in the southern portion of the planning area, which includes a portion of the San Pablo Bay Wildlife Refuge.

The Valley's population of 29,531 in 1980 was concentrated in the City of Sonoma and the unincorporated communities of Agua Caliente, Feters Hot Springs, El Verano and Boyes Hot Springs -- all located just outside the city -- and Kenwood and Glen Ellen, which are located in the northern and central portions of the Valley respectively. Other population clusters exist in rural residential areas located east, west and south of the City of Sonoma, along arterial roads in the vicinity of Glen Ellen, along Trinity and Cavedale Roads in the Mayacamas Mountains, and in several planned developments such as Melec, George Ranch, Diamond A Ranch and Sobre Vista. The balance of the area's population is scattered in agricultural and hillside areas at very low densities. Agriculture -- particularly wine grapes -- and tourism are the mainstays of the local economy, although there is a limited number of manufacturing and service businesses along Eighth Street East, southeast of the City of Sonoma. Over one-third of local employment is in the "retail trade" and "services" sectors. A high proportion of the local workforce, nearly one-half, commutes to jobs outside the Valley. As with other planning areas, the Valley experienced substantial growth during the 1970s, when population increased at an effective average annual rate of 2.1 percent per year. This rate, however, was less than the county's overall population growth rate of 3.8 percent per year. One indicator of growth over the decade is the fact that one-third of the population in 1980 over five years of age resided outside the Valley in 1975.

### 9.2 GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Projected population and household growth through year-2005 and estimates of housing needs are shown in Table LU-29. The land-use plan for the Sonoma Valley planning area provides sufficient building sites to accommodate projected housing needs through year-2005. Projected changes in levels of employment by



**TABLE LU-29:**  
**Sonoma Valley: Selected Socio-demographic Data, 1980 to 2005**

	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
<b><u>TOTAL POPULATION</u></b>						
Sonoma Valley	29,531	32,890	35,930	37,500	3,130	7,970
<b><u>POPULATION DISTRIBUTION</u></b>						
Sonoma (City)	6,054	8,350	10,650	11,800	2,300	5,750
<b>Unincorporated Area (Total)</b>	23,477	24,540	25,280	25,700	830	2,220
City Expansion Areas	2,994	2,820	2,520	2,420	-170	-570
Communities	12,265	13,270	14,070	14,470		
With Sewer Service						
Agua Caliente, Boyes						
Hot Springs, El Verano						
Fetters Hot Springs	8,236	9,100	9,970	10,400	860	2,160
Eldridge	680	780	780	800	100	120
Glen Ellen	814	890	960	1,000	80	186
State Hospital	1,706	1,650	1,500	1,400	-60	-310
Other Communities						
Kenwood	829	850	860	870	20	40
Other Unincorporated	8,218	8,450	8,690	8,810	230	590
<b><u>HOUSEHOLDS</u></b>						
Population in Households	27,363	30,850	33,970	35,560		
Average Household Size	2.34	2.27	2.24	2.22	-0.06	-0.12
Total Households	11,678	13,580	15,140	16,000	1,900	4,320
<b><u>HOUSING UNITS</u></b>						
Year-round	11,966	13,870	15,430	16,290	1,900	4,320
Seasonal / Occassional Use	657	670	690	700	10	40
Total Housing Units	12,623	14,540	16,120	16,990	1,910	4,370

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.  
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major industry groups are presented in Table LU-30; employment projections reflect jobs located in Sonoma Valley, regardless of workers' places of residence. Over the 1980-2005 period, total population of the planning area is expected to increase by 27 percent to 37,500; this yields an effective average annual rate of increase of about one percent, or less than half the 1970-80 rate. Local jobs are expected to increase by 46 percent -- from 9,250 to 13,510 -- with the greatest gains in the "services" and "retail" sectors. The Sonoma Valley region is expected to continue to have the smallest average household size of the nine planning areas, decreasing from 2.34 persons per household in 1980 to 2.23 by year-2005. This trend reflects the relatively high proportion of elderly retired persons (19.3 percent in 1980) residing in the Valley.

The land-use plan map for the Sonoma Valley region is presented in Figure LU-6i; land-use plan data are summarized in Table LU-31.

### 3.9.3 ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

#### ISSUE #1: Correlation of Land-use Policy with Acceptable Levels-of-Service on Area Highways

Between 1975 and 1981 a series of three specific plans were prepared to guide urban development in the Valley's unincorporated communities. In 1985-86, Valley-wide traffic issues were reassessed in the Sonoma Valley Traffic Study (SVTS), and its major roadway improvement proposals are incorporated into the Circulation and Transit Element. The study concluded that "build-out" of the development authorized by specific plans for the primarily urban area bounded by Madrone Road, Arnold Drive, Petaluma Avenue and the eastern edge of the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District would result in prolonged daily periods of traffic congestion along Highway 12 and Arnold Drive. Based on this finding, land-use plan map designations for this area were revised to limit residential and commercial growth to about 40 percent of that previously authorized by specific plans. This reduction, together with the package of street improvements described in the SVTS, ensure level of service (LOS) "C" for virtually all arterial and collector road segments and intersections. Although the traffic study did not consider the effects of expanding the urban development area beyond its 1986 boundaries, it is clear that the addition of any new lands for urban development would have a substantial adverse effect on traffic conditions on Highway 12 and Arnold Drive.

**Objective LU-18.1:** It is the County's objective that the land use plan map for the Sonoma Valley authorize only that amount of future development which will be consistent with maintenance of a "C" level-of-service on arterial and collector highways.

**Objective LU-18.2:** It is the County's objective that approval of any urban residential, commercial or industrial development project within the unincorporated area be phased with the funding and/or construction of roadway improvements needed to maintain a "C" level-of-service on arterial roadways.

TABLE LU-30

Sonoma Valley: Employment and Employment Change by Industry, 1980 to 2005

INDUSTRY	Estimated	Projected			Projected Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-1990	1980-2005
Agriculture and Mining	730	660	600	710	-70	-20
Centralized Manufacturing	540	800	1,020	1,220	260	680
Decentralized Manufacturing	300	370	410	490	70	190
Transportation / Utilities	230	260	290	340	30	110
Retail and Wholesale Trade	1,440	1,800	1,980	2,310	350	870
Construction	550	660	720	750	110	200
Services	2,440	2,920	3,370	3,880	480	1,440
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	190	230	290	350	40	160
Government	2,840	2,840	2,970	3,460	0	620
Total	9,260	10,530	11,630	13,510	1,270	4,250
Basic	4,210	4,590	4,690	5,620	380	1,410
Population-Serving	5,050	6,090	6,940	7,890	1,040	2,840

Source: Angus McDonald Associates/Economic and Planning Systems, and Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986

Note: All numbers rounded.

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## **ISSUE #2: Urban Service Area Boundaries**

The principal issues with regard to the urban development boundaries depicted on the land-use map include: a) whether or not sufficient lands are included to accommodate the urban share of projected Valley-wide growth through year 2005, and b) whether or not the planned capacities of water supply and wastewater management systems will accommodate the projected urban growth. Additional issues in these areas pertain to the types and intensities of uses which should be permitted by the County on lands within the expansion area of the City of Sonoma prior to their annexation.

**Objective LU-18.3:** It is the County's objective that the urban service boundaries designated on the land-use plan map for the City of Sonoma and the unincorporated communities of Boyes Hot Springs/Agua Caliente/El Verano, Eldridge and Glen Ellen encompass sufficient lands to accommodate the projected amounts of growth through year 2005 and that other lands not be added.

**Objective LU-18.4:** It is the County's objective that development within the City of Sonoma and the unincorporated urban service area be closely monitored and jointly coordinated.

**Objective LU-18.5:** It is the County's objective that urban services not be extended to any lands outside the urban service boundary, except for contiguous parcels with demonstrated failing septic systems.

**Objective LU-18.6:** It is the County's objective that urban development on lands within the urban service boundary of the City of Sonoma not occur until their annexation by the City.

**Objective LU-18.7:** It is the County's objective that approvals of any urban development projects within unincorporated urban service areas be phased with the provision of adequate public services.

**Objective LU-18.8:** It is the County's objective that a new urban service area be established encompassing those land areas along the 8th Street East corridor which are designated for future industrial use, or that the subject area be included in the City's urban service boundary.

## **ISSUE #3: Agricultural Protection and Rural Development**

Sound agricultural land-use policies are essential to the Valley's economy, as well as its scenic rural character. Since much of the open land existing in the Valley is suitable for wine grape and other types of agricultural production, care should be taken that residential and other forms of development occur at locations and densities that do not adversely affect existing or potential agricultural uses. The most serious threat to preservation of the

TABLE LU-31:  
Sonoma Valley: Summary of Land-use Plan Data

Land-use Indicator	Urban Service Areas				Sonoma City Expansion Area	Rural Area	Unincorporated Area Total
	Boyes Hot Springs / El Verano	Eldridge	Glen Ellen				
RESIDENTIAL							
No. of existing parcels (DUs)(1985)	4,859	365	429		539	5,351	11,543
No. of new parcels (DUs) allowed	1,229	55	48		134	1,011	2,477
Total potential parcels (DUs)	6,088	420	477		673	6,362	14,020
Potential Population	13,515	932	1,059		1,494	14,124	31,124
Projected Residential Buildout Ratio	0.75	0.96	0.94		---	0.69	---
Percent Excess Residential Capacity	33%	4%	6%		---	44%	---
COMMERCIAL							
No. of Parcels	135	4	33		10	48	230
Acreage	68 Ac.	2 Ac.	17 Ac.		9 Ac.	72 Ac.	168 Ac.
INDUSTRIAL							
No. of Parcels	---	---	---		---	57	57
Acreage	---	---	---		---	325 Ac.	325 Ac.
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL OVERLAYS							
Resource-related							
No. of Parcels	---	---	---		---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---		---	---	---
Recreation or Visitor Serving							
No. of Parcels	---	---	---		---	---	---
Acreage	---	---	---		---	---	---

Valley's agricultural lands may be posed by economic pressures for additional rural residential development, which absorbs large quantities of land while leading to parcel sizes and land values that are not economic for agricultural production. Rural residential and visitor-serving commercial uses near agricultural lands may lead to land-use conflicts related to noise, odors, pesticide spraying and other by-products of routine agricultural activities.

**Objective LU-18.9:** It is the County's objective that lands classified in the agricultural use categories not be converted to rural residential, commercial, or industrial uses and that any residential development on such lands be related to agricultural production.

**Objective LU-18.10:** It is the County's objective to retain large parcel sizes in the productive agricultural areas of the Sonoma Valley to the extent practicable, in order to maintain the potential for continued agricultural use.

#### **ISSUE #4: Commercial Development**

There are about 215 acres of land devoted to commercial uses in unincorporated portions of Sonoma Valley, and approximately 24 acres of additional land zoned for commercial use that is either vacant or occupied by residential uses. Most of the commercial land is concentrated along Highway 12 in the Agua Caliente - Boyes Hot Springs corridor, with secondary concentrations in Glen Ellen and Kenwood. Although these data suggest that there is limited potential for new commercial development in unincorporated portions of the Valley, it should be noted that much of the existing occupied acreage is occupied by vacant buildings, residential uses or is otherwise underutilized. Inasmuch as the City of Sonoma provides commercial acreage (128 acres) that probably exceeds the needs of its population, planning for any additional commercial acreage in unincorporated portions of the Valley should be the subject of a coordinated city/county planning process.

**Objective LU-18.11:** It is the County's objective that Sonoma comprise the primary retail and service center for the Sonoma Valley and that Boyes Hot Springs, Glen Ellen, and Kenwood comprise secondary commercial centers.

**Objective LU-18.12:** It is the County's objective that the land-use plan map for the Sonoma Valley designate an amount of land for commercial uses which is sufficient to serve the projected size of the local residential community through year 2005.



**Objective LU-18.13:** It is the County's objective that new commercial uses be limited to sites within urban service area boundaries and that no additional commercial development beyond existing sites as of 1986 occur in rural areas.

#### **ISSUE #5: Industrial Development**

Opportunities for industrial development in the unincorporated portion of the Sonoma Valley are currently confined to a narrow corridor along Eighth Street East; this area includes about 355 acres, of which 114 were vacant in 1986. Projected demand for industrial land is considerably less. There are three principal constraints to utilizing available industrial land to generate significant new local employment: a) lack of public water and sewerage services; b) the large number of separate parcels and their physical configurations impede integrated development; and c) limited local road capacities and accessibility to the regional road network.

**Objective LU-18.14:** It is the County's objective that future industrial development in unincorporated portions of the Sonoma Valley be restricted to lands designated for this use along the 8th Street East corridor.

**Objective LU-18.15:** Until water and sewer services are available in the 8th Street East corridor, it is the County's objective that additional industrial development be limited in amount and intensity to those uses which can be accommodated with individual wells and septic systems; it is preferred that development not occur until public services are provided.

#### **ISSUE #6: Sonoma Valley Redevelopment Project Area Policy**

In 1984, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Redevelopment Plan for a 325-acre portion of the Boyes Hot Springs-Agua Caliente area shown in Figure LU-7c. The objectives of the plan are to:

- (1) improve traffic and pedestrian circulation by constructing, or assisting in the construction of, off-street parking facilities, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and storm drains and other traffic-related improvements;
- (2) assist private developers in the acquisition, preparation, redevelopment and disposal of commercial and residential lands;
- (3) assist in the funding of projects which develop or rehabilitate housing for low- and moderate-income households; and
- (4) construct, or encourage the construction by private developers of public open space and other community facilities.

The redevelopment plan is intended to implement and to be complementary to the goals, objectives and policies of the general plan.



# SONOMA VALLEY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA

## LAND USE ELEMENT

**Objective LU-18.16:** It is the County's objective that the Sonoma Valley Redevelopment Plan and the general plan be jointly implemented in a consistent and mutually-reinforcing manner. In furtherance of this aim, it is the county's intent that the general plan provide for flexibility in the application of land-use designations within the redevelopment project area.

#### **ISSUE #7: Resource Conservation**

In addition to agricultural resources, the Sonoma Valley planning area contains the following natural resources:

- wilderness portions of the Sonoma and Mayacamas Mountains, which provide habitats for many native plant and animal species, and where development opportunities are often constrained by environmental factors (eg. steep or unstable slopes), poor access and/or lack of public services.
- tidal marshland along San Pablo Bay (including a portion of the San Pablo Bay Wildlife Refuge), which provides habitats for several rare or endangered species, and where development opportunities are constrained by flood hazards.
- riparian corridors adjoining the area's many creeks, which provide habitats for freshwater marine life (including two rare or endangered species), which are threatened by erosion and siltation resulting from agricultural activities and residential development.

The principal issue related to these natural resources is the types and intensities of uses that are compatible with their conservation.

**Objective LU-18.17:** It is the County's objective that permitted residential densities not exceed 40 acres per dwelling in any area which is classified in a natural resource category and that large parcel sizes be retained to the extent practicable in such areas. This policy shall not apply to the area south of Bennett Valley Road west of its intersection with Warm Springs Road, or to the area east of Warm Springs Road between the communities of Kenwood and Glen Ellen, where 20 acre density is designated in recognition of the lot pattern existing as of 1986.

**Objective LU-18.18:** It is the County's objective that recreation and visitor serving uses in natural resource areas of the Sonoma Valley be limited to outdoor uses and that lodging facilities be prohibited on land designated in these use categories.



#### **9.4 LAND-USE POLICIES FOR THE SONOMA VALLEY REGION**

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to urban service boundaries and the lands located therein:

**LU-18a:** Connection of any additional parcels to the Sonoma Valley Sanitation District beyond the boundaries established on the land-use plan map shall be limited to contiguous parcels with existing development whose on-site septic systems are failing and resulting in health and safety problems; parcels provided services for this reason shall not be authorized additional development potential beyond that authorized prior to connection to the sewer system. Out-of-service area agreements shall be the preferred mechanism rather than annexation to the district.

**LU-18b:** Urban residential and commercial development shall not be authorized on lands which are within the expansion area of the City of Sonoma but outside the boundaries of the Sonoma Valley Sanitation District as of 1986, prior to annexation by the City.

**LU-18c:** Approval by the County of discretionary development permits on lands within urban service boundaries, except for Sonoma, shall be granted only if there is a written certification by the applicable service entity that it can provide service to the new development and meet existing service demands without adversely affecting the level of service or environmental quality.

**LU-18d:** The County shall jointly establish with the City of Sonoma procedures to allow for county and city review of proposed development projects located close proximity to their respective boundaries.

**LU-18e:** Development of parcels within the Sonoma Valley Sanitation District and which are within the primary sphere of influence of the City of Sonoma shall be encouraged to occur only after annexation to the City. Prior to annexation by the City, development at urban densities (1+ units/acre) shall not be approved by the county.

**LU-19f:** Within the Sonoma Valley Redevelopment Project Area shown in Figure LU-7a, the following range of discretion may be used in applying and interpreting the land-use plan map when considering projects involving the Redevelopment Agency as a participant:

1. A parcel which is 8,000 square feet or smaller and contiguous (or separated by a public right-of-way) to another parcel which has a different commercial, public, or residential use category may be authorized the same use as any of the contiguous parcels in order to accomplish an integrated redevelopment project.

2. Public and quasi public uses, including public parking, may be authorized on any parcel or group of parcels whose combined size is 16,000 square feet or less.

Any necessary rezoning shall be processed concurrently with the appropriate development permit(s); applications for rezoning and/or a development permit shall not be determined to be complete until an administrative finding has been made by the Planning Director that the proposed project conforms to the intent of this policy.

**LU-18g:** In recognition of the unique historic and cultural qualities of Glen Ellen, the county encourages and shall cooperate in the preparation of a community design plan funded and coordinated by the Glen Ellen Association. It is the County's intent that the completed plan be submitted for review and action by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

The following policies are applicable to agricultural and rural development in the Sonoma Valley region:

**LU-18h:** Additional lodging, bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, and other retail businesses are prohibited on lands classified for agricultural production in the Sonoma Valley. Larger tasting rooms or visitor centers at wineries shall be accommodated where appropriate through application of a recreation and visitor commercial overlay. Approval of any amendment to the land-use plan map for this purpose shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The use will not require the removal of an existing vineyard and will not impact existing agricultural operations.
2. Visual impacts can be mitigated through building setbacks and screening.
3. The site is not located within an environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, fault zone, riparian corridor, or unique habitat area.
4. Traffic generated by the use can be accommodated with an acceptable level of service on existing roadways and will not interfere with the movement of farm vehicles.
5. Adequate access is available for emergency vehicles.

**LU-18i:** Proposals to increase the maximum permitted residential density on any lands designated for agricultural production in the Sonoma Valley region shall not be approved.

**LU-18j:** Large-scale agricultural processing facilities, including large-scale wineries, may be accommodated in appropriate locations within the Sonoma Valley region by application of the "resources-related commercial-industrial" overlay to the subject parcel.

**LU-18k:** The portion of Bennett Valley along Sonoma Mountain and Enterprise Roads designated "Diverse Agriculture, 10 and 15 acre residential density" shall be exempt from the 10-acre minimum parcel size normally applicable in the "Diverse Agriculture land-use category.

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to commercial uses in the Sonoma Valley region:

**LU-18l:** The development or redevelopment of existing commercial land within urban service areas shall be encouraged over the designation of additional lands for new commercial uses.

**LU-18m:** The "general commercial" use category shall not be applied to any land area located outside the Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano/Agua Caliente urban service boundary.

**LU-18n:** In the Sonoma Valley region, the "Limited Commercial" land-use designation shall be utilized for existing and new commercial uses in those communities with urban services, including Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano/Agua Caliente and Glen Ellen, and the Kenwood community. The land use plan map designates a quantity of land for this purpose which is sufficient to meet the needs of each local area to year 2005. The following findings shall be required to be adopted by the appropriate decision-making body prior to approval of a quasi-judicial discretionary permit, including subdivision, use permits and design review, for any proposed commercial use on these lands:

1. The proposed use will be of a size, scale, and intensity which is appropriate for and compatible with the character of the local community.
2. Public service capacities are adequate to accommodate the proposed use and the level of service will not be adversely affected.
3. The design of the proposed use is in harmony with the natural and scenic qualities of the local area.

**LU-18o:** Proposals to add additional lands for "limited commercial" development within the Sonoma Valley region shall not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:



1. The lands are located in an urban service area or in the community of Kenwood.
2. No lands designated for "limited commercial" development are vacant, or the supply of vacant land designated for such uses is insufficient to meet commercial needs due to the projected growth of the local community.
3. Service capacities, including water and sewer systems and roads, are adequate to accommodate the additional development without substantially affecting the level of service received by other existing and planned uses.
4. Approvals of any quasi-judicial discretionary permits on such lands shall require adoption of the findings expressed in Policy LU-18n.

**LU-18p:** The "recreation and visitor-serving" commercial use category shall not be applied to any lands located outside the urban service boundaries of communities, except for the community of Kenwood. In rural areas, these types of uses shall be limited to large-scale wine tasting/visitor centers at wineries.

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to industrial uses in the Sonoma Valley region:

**LU-18q:** The County shall encourage development of local employment opportunities on commercial and industrial sites designated on the plan land-use plan map in a manner consistent with available public services.

**LU-18r:** The County shall encourage preparation of a specific plan to accommodate industrial development in the Eighth Street East Corridor and to identify the appropriate infrastructure and mechanisms for its financing and phasing. The specific plan shall address the provision and funding of water, sewer, roadway and other improvements, and shall contain design standards applicable to development in the corridor. The land area considered for industrial use in the specific plan may -- at the direction of the Board of Supervisors -- include land not presently designated for industrial use on the general plan land-use map, but shall not include parcels that are designated for non-industrial uses by the City of Sonoma general plan.

**LU-18s:** Any approvals of commercial or industrial development in the Eighth Street East corridor prior to adoption of an industrial area specific plan shall conform to the following criteria:

1. Proof of an adequate water supply for the proposed use(s), including fire flow and landscaping needs subject to review and approval by the Sonoma County Department of Public Health and the Director of County Fire Services.

2. Proof of an adequate means of sewage disposal, subject to review and approval of the Sonoma County Department of Public Health.
3. An agreement signed by the property owner indicating non-objection to inclusion of the subject parcel in a benefit assessment district. The purpose of the assessment district, if established, shall be to finance construction of any necessary infrastructure, including sewer facilities.
4. Prior to availability of sewer service, prospective occupants of commercial or industrial buildings shall provide a description of all proposed commercial or industrial operations to the Sonoma County Department of Health prior to occupancy. The description shall provide information on the type(s) and amount(s) of all toxic or hazardous materials to be used or produced on-site. The Department of Public Health may require preparation and approval of a Hazardous Waste Management Plan prior to each initial or subsequent commercial or industrial occupancy. These requirements shall be made conditions of use permit and/or design review approvals for all future commercial or industrial development projects.
5. A 40 foot landscaped building setback shall be maintained along all property lines abutting parcels designated for agricultural or rural residential use.
6. The first priority in design review of any commercial or industrial project shall be to ensure appropriate screening of proposed commercial or industrial uses from the view of residential or agricultural uses on adjoining lots. To the extent possible, screening requirements shall include measures such as berms or fencing that provide immediate relief from adverse visual impacts.

The following policies of the County of Sonoma are applicable to lands designated for resource conservation in the Sonoma Valley region:

**LU-18t:** Building envelopes shall be required for all subdivision maps for parcels in the Resource Conservation land-use category, and for parcels containing or adjoining riparian corridors.

**LU-18u:** Any new construction in hillside areas shall be required to be located below ridgelines and to be screened by existing or native vegetation.

**LU-18v:** Higher residential densities shall not be approved for any parcel or land area designated for resource conservation.





**D LAND-USE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM: 1987 - 1992**

**Land-use Program 1: Zoning Ordinance Maps**

**Type of Program:** Zoning Ordinance  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Timeframe:** Within 1 year following adoption of revised general plan  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget  
**Policy Reference:** LU-1d

**Program Description:** Prepare for adoption by the Board of Supervisors nine mapped ordinances (one for each planning region) to bring zoning countywide into conformance with the land-use plan maps following their adoption.

**Land-use Program 2: Revisions to Zoning District Regulations**

**Type of Program:** Zoning Ordinance  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department and Office of County Counsel  
**Timeframe:** Within 1 year following adoption of revised general plan  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocation  
**Policy Reference:** LU-1d

**Program Description:** Rewrite and reorganize portions of chapter 26 of the Sonoma County Code (Zoning Ordinance) to provide several resource, residential, commercial and industrial base districts with a series of related combining districts that further define permitted uses in incremental groupings. Base districts may include: Resource Conservation, Exclusive Agricultural, Primary Agricultural, Rural Residential, Urban Residential, Commercial and Industrial. Combining districts shall supplement regulations of the base districts to express additional distinctions between natural resources, (timber, mineral and geothermal resource uses), various intensities of urban residential uses, various types and intensities of commercial and industrial uses, and various groupings of development standards and performance standards. The intent of the program is to achieve a closer correspondence of zoning districts with the general plan use categories and policies.

### **Land-use Program 3: Revisions of Previously Adopted Specific Plans**

**Type of Program:** Specific Plan  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Timeframe:** Within 3 years of adoption of revised general plan  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocation  
**Policy Reference:** LU-3a, 3b, 4c, 4d, 4e

**Program Description:** Preparation of revised specific plan land-use and zoning maps as necessary to be consistent with the adopted general plan; clarify application of specific plan policies within context of general plan land-use categories. Some specific plans, primarily in rural areas, may be rescinded rather than updated so as to simplify the planning and permit-processing system.

### **Land-use Program 4: New Specific Plans for Selected Urban Service Areas**

**Type of Program:** Specific Plan  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Timeframe:** Within 5 years of adoption of revised general plan  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in Departmental budget allocation  
**Policy Reference:** LU-1a, LU-1b, 4c, d, e, 5b

**Program Description:** Several specific plans may be prepared for small land areas encompassing unincorporated places having sewer service to correlate land-use planning with public facility and capital improvement planning. Areas may include Boyes Hot Springs/Agua Caliente, Glen Ellen, Eighth Street East, Central Forestville and Graton.

### **Land-use Program 5: Development Activity Monitoring**

**Type of Program:** Administrative monitoring of development permit approvals  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning, Building, and Public Works Departments  
**Timeframe:** On-going  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increases in departmental budget allocations  
**Policy Reference:** LU-1c, LU-2a, 2b

**Program Description :** Development and building permit activities shall be monitored within each planning region and each urban service area, including the eight cities. Annexations to the eight cities and urban service districts would also be monitored. Reports to the Board of Supervisors would be prepared on an annual basis, and would include analysis of impacts of growth in the county and the cities. Population and economic projections would be evaluated and revised as appropriate on a periodic basis, but no less than every five years.

## **Land-use Program 6: Growth Management / Phasing of Development**

**Type of Program:** Zoning and/or General Police Power

**Responsible Agency:** Planning and Public Works Departments and County Counsel

**Timeframe:** On-going

**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocations

**Policy Reference:** LU-2c, LU-5a, 5b

**Program Description:** The program will entail preparation of ordinances which would regulate issuance of planning and development permits, including building permits, in any area which is determined to have a deficiency in public facilities and that deficiency would be exacerbated by additional development leading to potential threats to the health, safety or welfare of the public. The program would also evaluate mechanisms to accomplish the necessary facility improvements. Issuance of discretionary permits may be stopped until said improvements have been completed and have adequately improved the level of service.

Based on permit monitoring by planning area, if growth in either urban or rural areas appears to be approaching the year 2005 target prematurely, issuance of discretionary planning and development permits, specifically plan amendments, rezonings, subdivisions and use permits for planned developments, shall be regulated in a manner so that growth targets are not prematurely accomplished or exceeded.

## **Land-use Program 7: Transferable Development Rights Study**

**Type of Program:** Administrative Study

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Timeframe:** Prior to 1988 ballot preparation

**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocation

**Policy Reference:**

**Program Description:** A study will be undertaken to evaluate voluntary programs to purchase and transfer development rights; a proposed program would be formulated for placing before the voters as a measure on the ballot during a general election. The study would address:

- (1) Determination of program cost and funding source(s). If, and only if adequate funding source(s) are determined, the following steps shall be effectuated:
- (2) Determination of program objectives, i.e., within the given funding limits, to protect the greatest amount of acreage, or to protect specified "threatened" areas.
- (3) Development of criteria to determine what lands would be eligible for purchase of development rights.
- (4) Establishment of priority areas for purchase of development rights.



**Land-use Program 8: Formation of an On-going General Plan Advisory Committee**

**Type of Program:** Administrative

**Responsible Agency:** Board of Supervisors / Planning Department

**Timeframe:** Upon adoption of revised general plan

**Budgetary Impact:** None

**Policy Reference:**

**Program Description:** A committee will be established composed of a representative from the City Council of each of the eight cities, two members of the Board of Supervisors, and seven members from the general public. The committee shall meet on a regularly scheduled basis to monitor the policies and implementation of the countywide general plan, to identify any changes or adjustments that may be necessary or desirable from time to time, to identify appropriate means of coordinating the general plans of the county and the cities, and to review any planning matters of mutual or countywide concern..

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HOUSING ELEMENT  
of the  
SONOMA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

SONOMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
575 Administration Drive, Rm. 105A  
Santa Rosa, California 95401

Adopted by Resolution No. 86-2077  
of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
September 30, 1986





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## EFACE

**Purpose and Authority.** The housing element of the general plan is a detailed statement of housing goals, objectives, policies and programs for unincorporated areas of Sonoma County. The element is based on a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs, and on an analysis of market, environmental, governmental and other factors which affect the extent to which those needs are satisfied. The purpose of the element is to provide information to the public on housing issues, and to serve as a guide for decision-making by elected and appointed officials over the 20-year timeframe of the general plan.

The housing element responds to the content requirements of California law (Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 10.6), which call for a plan that:

- evaluates the effectiveness of the existing housing element (adopted in January 1978; amended in September 1979) in attaining the County's housing goals and objectives;
- assesses housing needs and evaluates resources and constraints relevant to the maintenance, development and improvement of housing;
- states the county's goals, quantified objectives and policies relative to the maintenance, development and improvement of housing; and
- sets forth a five-year schedule of actions the county is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement housing policies and achieve housing goals and objectives.

**Organization of Element.** The housing element is divided into seven sections, which address the content requirements of California law as follows:

Section 1.0 contains an overview of housing market trends and projections, including data on population, employment and households.

Section 2.0 identifies housing issue areas and presents overall goals relevant to each.

Sections 3.0 - 7.0 contain detailed analyses of specific housing issues, including assessments of existing and projected housing needs, and of resources and constraints relative to those needs. Each section concludes with objectives and policies designed to address identified needs.

Section 8.0 assesses the effectiveness of county actions over the past five years in meeting housing needs, and outlines a detailed program of actions designed to address identified housing needs over the next five years.

The element also refers to a technical supplement which contains detailed data and information on sources and methods employed in analyzing housing issues.

**Consistency With Other General Plan Elements.** The thirteen elements of the Sonoma County General Plan serve as a detailed guide to the long-term physical development of the county. As such, all are interrelated, with the effectiveness of each dependent in large part on compatibility with other elements. California law recognizes the interdependence of general plan elements and requires that the plan comprise an "integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies" (Government Code, Section 65300.5).

The goals, objectives, policies and programs of the housing element are designed to be compatible and consistent with the other adopted general plan elements. However, in some instances, programs calling for further study of specific housing issues may lead to future recommendations for policy change that cannot be assessed for consistency at this time. Consistency determinations on such recommendations will be made on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with the review of specific program proposals.

**Citizen Participation.** The content of the housing element reflects formal and informal input from a variety of sources. A principal source was the Housing Element Advisory Committee, appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The committee's membership included persons with knowledge of residential design, development and finance, environmental data and issues, economic development and consumer concerns. Over a six-month period, the committee reviewed housing issues and potential policies; it considered all aspects of the element prior to its submission to the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). All committee meetings were announced and open to the public.

Following Committee review and approval, the draft element was the subject of public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. These hearings were advertised in five different newspapers published in various areas of the county. Copies of the draft element were made available for public review at the Planning Department and at nine regional libraries; 175 copies were distributed to agencies and individuals. Altogether, the hearing process provided six separate opportunities for testimony over the four-month public review period. A total of 24 individuals or organizations, representing all economic segments of the county's population, presented oral or written testimony at these hearings.

Other sources of input included contacts with residential lenders, developers of low and moderate income housing, utility districts, staffs of other departments of Sonoma County government and of city planning agencies within the county, and with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Planning Department gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all these individuals and agencies to the housing element.

## 1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE SONOMA COUNTY HOUSING MARKET

Sonoma County's eight cities, numerous small unincorporated communities, and diverse rural landscapes accommodate a wide range of residential environments. Although limited opportunities for new large-lot rural housing remain, this once-common form of residential development is increasingly being supplanted by urban-style neighborhoods of single-family subdivisions and attached dwellings as characteristic of the county's housing stock. Many areas of the county continue to be attractive locations for retirement housing, while the Sonoma Coast, Russian River and some agricultural regions provide settings for second-home development.

A distinguishing feature of the county's housing market has been its remarkable growth during the last two decades. In the 1970's the rate of population growth was the highest among the nine counties of the San Francisco Bay region. Rapid expansion of the housing market has been accompanied by escalation of housing prices and rents. With prices and rents increasing more rapidly than household incomes, and with a trend in residential finance markets towards interest rates which are high by historical standards, the housing affordability problem has extended beyond low- and moderate-income households to increasingly affect middle-income housing consumers. Problems of housing availability and costs remain especially acute in the rental sector of the market. The rapid pace of growth has focused attention upon the tension between a strong demand for rural homesites and a desire to retain and conserve the agricultural heritage and landscape amenities of the county's unique countryside.

### 1.1 Housing Market Area

Although Sonoma County is a part of the greater San Francisco Bay Area region, for purposes of this plan the housing market area is defined as coterminous with the geographical boundaries of the County. However, the accessibility of the county to employment locations in Marin, San Francisco, and some other portions of the Bay Area inevitably link its housing market to the larger region. In 1980, slightly more than 17 percent of the employed residents commuted to workplaces outside the county, primarily in Marin and San Francisco. Out-commuting is especially significant in southern Sonoma County areas nearest the central Bay Area. Several thousand persons living in other counties, notably Marin, commuted to workplaces in Sonoma County. While the county undoubtedly will continue to serve as a residential location for some people who are employed elsewhere in the Bay Area, this segment's share of the housing market is likely to diminish as the county's internal economy expands and matures and as traffic congestion makes long-distance commuting less attractive. This tendency was already evident during the past decade. Data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), for example, indicate that the number of residents commuting to jobs located within the county increased more rapidly than did the number of residents commuting to work elsewhere in the Bay Area. Housing price and rent levels considerably below those for comparable living space in Marin and San Francisco will continue to result in demand for housing in Sonoma County by persons employed in those areas.



Within the county itself, nine different geographical submarkets have been defined. As shown in Figure 1, these correspond to the nine planning areas identified in the land-use element. Detailed data by planning area are presented in the technical supplement to this element.

## **1.2 Market Characteristics and Recent Trends**

During the decade from 1970 to 1980, new housing demand, as measured by growth in the number of households, expanded more rapidly than did the supply of housing units. Countywide, about 46,600 households were added, while the housing stock increased by approximately 46,100 units. Although the imbalance was even greater in unincorporated areas, household growth was accommodated in part by conversion of homes held for occasional use to year-round occupancy.

**Housing Demand.** The principal determinants of housing demand include the level of employment and population, the number of households, and household income. Sonoma County's expanding economy added about 40,500 jobs during the past decade, an increase of 60 percent, while 94,800 residents were added to the population, an increase of 46 percent. Although a portion of population growth has been due to natural increase, an excess of births over deaths, about 85 percent of the growth since 1970 has been the result of net in-migration to the county from other areas of California and the nation. Some in-migration to the county is retirement-related, although the largest share is associated with persons obtaining employment in the County or Bay-Area.

Reflecting a nation-wide trend, the number of households (defined as a group of persons occupying a separate housing unit) residing in Sonoma County increased considerably more rapidly than population during the last decade. This trend was a consequence of reductions in average household size over time, associated with social phenomena such as higher divorce rates, older age at marriage, postponement of having children, smaller family sizes, preferences by many singles for living alone, and an increase in the share of the population which was elderly. The number of households residing in Sonoma County expanded by over 46,600 from 1970 to 1980, reaching a total of about 114,500 in 1980. During this time, average household size declined by 12 percent, from 2.92 persons per household in 1970 to 2.56 in 1980. Without any population growth, therefore, housing demand in the county would be increasing. The unincorporated portion of the county gained about 15,600 households during the decade, representing a growth rate (46 percent) only one-half that of the eight cities. Median household income was estimated to be \$28,400 in 1984. Data generally indicate that increases in household incomes have not kept pace with price inflation, in particular with increases in the shelter component of the consumer price index.

**Housing Supply.** The Sonoma County housing stock was estimated to total about 133,400 units as of January 1, 1984 -- an increase of 9,200 units since April 1980. Approximately 44 percent of the stock, 58,600 units, was located in unincorporated portions of the County. About 31 percent of the net gain in housing units between 1970 and 1980 occurred in unincorporated areas, compared to only about one-fourth of new residential construction since 1980. Housing construction in unincorporated areas has averaged 620 units on an annual basis



Figure 1

since 1980, based upon final inspection records. Countywide, single-family units continue to dominate the new construction market. Single-family units, including mobile homes, comprised 71 percent of the new stock added since 1980, about the same share as in the 1970's. The Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park-Cotati sub-markets have accounted for six out of every ten new units constructed.

**Housing Occupancy.** About 6,300 dwellings, or five percent of the County's total housing stock in 1980, may be classified as "non-year-round" housing, including units which were seasonal, held for occasional use, vacant and boarded-up, and other vacant units not on the market. The available year-round housing stock, defined as units occupied by either owners or renters plus vacant units which were for sale or rent, totaled about 117,900 dwellings. Slightly over 2,900 year-round units were vacant in 1980, for an overall vacancy rate of just under 2.5 percent. The vacancy rate in the ownership sector of the market was 2.2 percent while the rental vacancy rate was 3.1 percent. About 63.5 percent of the occupied units were owner-occupied, while 36.5 percent were occupied by renters. A slight downward trend has occurred in the rate of owner-occupancy since 1970 when the rate was 64.4 percent. If this rate of owner-occupancy had been maintained in 1980, an additional 950 households would have owned their homes. In general, the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County are characterized by a higher rate of owner-occupancy, a lower vacancy rate in the ownership sector of the market, and a higher rental vacancy rate relative to the incorporated areas.

In 1980, the countywide median value of owner-occupied housing was just over \$38,000, and more than one-third of these units exceeded \$100,000 in value. The median monthly rent level reported in 1980 was \$256, with about 10 percent of the units exceeding \$400 and one-fourth renting for less than \$200 per month. A rent survey conducted in 1984 by the Santa Rosa Department of Community Development found that median monthly rents in the metropolitan area for multi-family units ranged from \$400 for a studio unit to \$565 for a three-bedroom apartment.

### **1.3 Overview of Future Growth Trends**

The following sections briefly summarize projected growth in employment, population and households. For a more-detailed explanation and description of future growth trends, refer to various sections of the land-use element.

**County-wide.** A robust and maturing local economy, an accessible location at the periphery of the San Francisco Bay Area, and the high level of amenities associated with coastal valley environments are expected to continue to make Sonoma County one of the fastest growing areas in Northern California. About 32,500 new jobs are projected to be created in the county from 1980 to 1990, increasing the level of employment to about 140,400 in 1990. Further expansion to 189,700 is projected by year 2005. Although natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) and retirement-related in-migration are expected to remain important sources of population growth, the largest component of future growth will be due to in-migration of persons



obtaining employment in the county or the Bay Area. The increment of population growth associated with expanding in-county employment opportunities is expected to be less in the future than the historical pattern. Several factors account for this trend, including rising labor force participation rates for women, an increasing share of the population in the labor force age groups, and a continuing modest decline in the rate of out-commuting to work places in other Bay Area counties.

An additional 63,520 residents are projected from 1980 to 1990, increasing the county's population to 363,200. By year 2005, the population is projected to expand to 464,500, an increase of 55 percent over 1980. The number of households is projected to grow more rapidly than population, due to a decline in the average number of persons per household. However, future reductions in average household size are expected to be less dramatic than in the past two decades, indicating both higher fertility rates and socio-economic trends such as stabilization in divorce rates and a tendency towards shared living arrangements due in part to high housing costs. The total number of households residing in the county is projected to reach 143,570 by 1990, an increase of 29,090 over the decade, and 187,410 by year 2005. Average household size, which was 2.561 in 1980, is projected to fall to 2.48 by 1990 and 2.44 by 2005. Although the California Department of Finance (July 1984) has forecasted that average household sizes will be higher, the numbers utilized in this plan result in a more conservative, that is higher, estimate of future housing requirements.

**Cities and Unincorporated Areas.** The number of residents in unincorporated areas is projected to reach 126,150 by 1990, approximately 33 percent of the county's total population of 363,200. This growth pattern represents a continuation of the trend since 1950 of declining shares of the population residing in unincorporated areas. As the county became more urbanized, the proportion of the population in unincorporated areas declined from 63.8 percent in 1950 to 44.4 percent in 1980. This trend is projected to continue to year 2005 when only about one-third of the population, or 147,000 persons, would reside in unincorporated areas. As in the past, some growth by the County's eight municipalities is projected to be the result of annexations of adjacent residential areas which were developed in the unincorporated county. The gross change in the number of households in unincorporated areas, or growth in "new households," is more important than the net change which reflects losses due to annexations. "New household" growth is projected to be 5,700 in unincorporated areas between 1980 and 1990; the net change in the number of households of 2,920 reflects annexation of lands on which 3,060 households resided in 1980. Although all cities may potentially annex existing housing units, the major component is projected to occur in Santa Rosa, where in 1980 about 9,600 households resided in unincorporated but urbanized areas adjacent to the city. An additional 11,800 "new households" are projected for unincorporated areas between 1990 and year 2005.

**Planning Areas.** At the end of the 20-year planning period in 2005, about two-thirds of the county's population is projected to reside in the three most urbanized planning areas -- Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Rohnert Park-Cotati.

The Santa Rosa planning area, with 190,000 residents, will contain 40 percent of the total county population. The highest rates of growth between 1980 and 2005 are projected to occur in the Healdsburg planning area, with an increase of 133 percent, and the Rohnert Park-Cotati planning area, with an increase of 72 percent. The major share of growth in the Healdsburg planning area is expected to occur in the unincorporated community of Windsor.

The pattern of household growth generally follows that of population. Between 1980 and 1990, nearly 13,520 additional households will have to be accommodated within the Santa Rosa planning area, an increase of 27 percent over 1980. Both the Healdsburg and Rohnert Park-Cotati planning areas, however, are expected to have higher growth rates. During the entire planning period to year 2005, the Santa Rosa planning area ranks first in household growth (31,050), followed by the Petaluma (10,800), Healdsburg (10,310) and Rohnert Park-Cotati (9,480) planning areas. The highest rate of growth in households is in the Healdsburg planning area, reflecting the rapid pace of new development anticipated in the unincorporated community of Windsor.

## 0 HOUSING ISSUES AND GOALS

### 1 Introduction

The policy and program components of the housing element use the following terminology:

Goal. A general statement of a desired future condition or end to which effort will be directed throughout the time horizon of a plan. A goal provides a clear sense of direction for future actions.

Objective. A specific, detailed statement of a desired future condition or end, which the county is committed to achieve within a stated time period. An objective expresses a short- to intermediate-term (1-5 year) target; progress towards an objective is measurable.

Policy. A specific statement of an action that is intended to be taken, or a means that is intended to be employed, to achieve an objective. Policies imply commitments of time and personnel, financial and administrative resources.

Program. A specific, organized series of actions that implement a policy. Program statements provide detailed information on the manner in which a policy will be carried out.

California law governing the content of housing elements states: "It is recognized that the total housing needs identified...may exceed available resources... Under these circumstances, the quantified objectives need not be identical to the identified existing housing needs, but should establish the maximum number of housing units that can be constructed, rehabilitated and conserved over a five-year time frame." Since Sonoma County's housing needs exceed available resources, the objectives, policies and programs of the Housing Element represent the maximum feasible commitment of resources to address identified needs. In the absence of an express mandatory obligation imposed by state or federal law, language contained in the draft housing element which may be construed as the self-imposition of a mandatory duty upon the county pursuant to Government Code Section 815.6 shall not be construed as mandatory; rather, it shall be construed as permissive in nature.

Sonoma County's overall housing goal is the provision of "a decent home and suitable living environment" for every county resident. The more specific statements of goals which follow essentially clarify the various dimensions or components of this overriding goal; housing objectives and policies are stated at the end of Parts 3.0 - 7.0; the 1984-90 housing program is expressed in Part 8.0.

### 2.2 Housing Supply, Location and Geographic Distribution

**Issues:** Based on analyses of market trends, it is projected that an additional 5,690 households need to be accommodated in unincorporated areas between 1980 and 1990; dwellings for another 11,810 households will be needed between 1990 and 2005. Issues include: the provision of a sufficient number



of housing units to accommodate household growth, and the location of new residential development in relation to employment centers, urban service availability, transportation system capacity, and environmental suitability characteristics of the land.

**Goal 1: Housing Supply.** It is the goal of Sonoma County to encourage construction of a supply of housing adequate to accommodate projected household growth in a manner consistent with available infrastructure and environmental constraints.

**Goal 2: Location of New Construction.** It is the goal of Sonoma County that the major share of new housing be constructed in the expansion areas of cities and in those unincorporated communities which have adequate urban services such as water and sewerage systems.

**Goal 3: Geographic Distribution of New Housing.** It is the goal of the County that new housing be distributed among the nine planning areas in a manner which reflects growth in employment opportunities, environmental resources and constraints and availability of urban services.

### **2.3 Housing Costs and Affordable Housing**

**Issues:** Two different forms of housing costs are distinguished: the costs to producers of providing housing services and the costs to individuals and households of consuming housing services. Producers' costs include the various expenditures by builders necessary to construct new housing as well as the costs to investors of providing rental housing services. Consumer costs may be further categorized as to expenditures required to own and occupy a home or the expenditures necessary to occupy rental housing. Issues include: the proportion of household income consumers should be expected to pay for housing; the effects of market and governmental factors on production costs and consumer expenditures; and the means of providing an adequate supply of housing at price and rent levels which are affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

**Goal 4: Effects of County Policies on Production Costs.** It is the County's goal that its policies, regulations and procedures not add unnecessarily to the costs of producing housing while assuring attainment of other objectives regarding provision of services to accommodate residential development and conservation of agricultural, environmental and scenic resources.

**Goal 5: Production of New Affordable Housing.** It is the goal of Sonoma County to encourage production of new housing which will have prices or rents which are affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

**Goal 6: Consumer Expenditures.** It is the County's goal to encourage the attainment of a housing expenditures:income ratio that is not excessive for any household with low or moderate income.

#### **4. Distribution of Housing Services to Population Sub-groups with Special Housing Needs**

**Issues:** Some population sub-groups have special housing needs. These needs frequently involve limited incomes, but also include other factors such as age, marital status or handicaps that limit housing opportunities. The population sub-groups which have been determined to have special housing needs are elderly persons, the migrant farmworker population, large-family households, single-parent households with children, racial and ethnic minorities, handicapped persons, and persons with emergency shelter needs. Issues include the magnitude of such needs and the appropriate means to address them.

**Goal 7: Distribution of Housing Services.** It is the goal of Sonoma County to encourage the attainment of adequate and affordable housing and a market free of discrimination for population groups with special shelter needs: the elderly, migrant farmworker households, large families, racial and ethnic minorities, handicapped persons, single-parent households with young children, and individuals with emergency shelter needs.

#### **4.5 Housing Quality**

**Issues:** Housing quality concerns involve the existing housing stock, the quality of new residential construction and the conservation of existing residential neighborhoods. Issues include: the quantity and location of existing substandard units and deteriorating neighborhoods, the level of quality that should be sought in new residential construction, and the extent to which energy conservation measures should be encouraged in the construction of new units and the rehabilitation of existing units.

**Goal 8: Quality of Existing Housing Stock.** It is the goal of Sonoma County that the existing housing stock be maintained in safe, healthful and serviceable condition, with current deficiencies eliminated and future deterioration prevented, so that it may be occupied on a long-term basis.

**Goal 9: Quality of New Residential Construction.** It is the County's goal that new housing units be produced at quality levels which will assure safe and healthful living environments, while allowing some flexibility in the construction standards for new residential units.

**Goal 10: Conservation of Residential Neighborhoods.** It is the County's goal to conserve residential neighborhoods in a manner which encourages private reinvestment for upgrading and maintenance of existing housing.

**Goal 11: Neighborhood Compatibility of New Residential Development.** It is the County's goal to conserve the positive environmental and cultural qualities of residential neighborhoods by ensuring that the design of new residential development is compatible with the surrounding natural and built environment.

**Goal 12: Residential Energy Conservation.** It is the County's goal to encourage development of a base minimum level (ie. R-19 ceiling insulation, caulking, weather stripping, low-flow showerheads, water heater blankets and pipe/duct insulation) of residential energy conservation practice by Sonoma County residents.

## 2.6 Variety and Choice in Residential Environments

**Issues:** Types of housing choices include location (urban vs. rural), structure types (single-family vs. multi-family units, conventional stick-built construction vs. manufactured housing), and tenure (ownership vs. rental). Issues include: the current range of choices available to consumers, factors which constrain or increase consumer choice, and the extent to which County policy may expand the range of housing choices without hindering the attainment of land-use, resource conservation and housing quality objectives.

**Goal 13: Choice of Residential Location.** It is the goal of the County of Sonoma to assure that housing opportunities are provided in a variety of urban and rural settings -- with rural residential development limited to areas where there are no conflicts with maintenance of public health and safety or with conservation of agricultural, environmental, open space or other natural resources.

**Goal 14: Choice of Residential Structure Types.** It is the County's goal that the housing stock provide a wide range of consumer choice among structure types and construction techniques.

**Goal 15: Choice of Residential Tenure.** It is the County's goal that the housing stock accommodate the needs of consumers in both the ownership and rental sectors, with emphasis on expanding rental housing opportunities.



## **3.0 ASSURING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY AND APPROPRIATE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF NEW HOUSING**

### **3.1 Housing Supply Needs**

Housing supply needs for unincorporated areas of the county through year-2005 are shown in Table 3.1; they are based on projections of household growth presented in the general plan land-use element.

#### **3.1.1 1984-90 Housing Needs**

Between April 1, 1980 and April 1, 1990, the total number of new housing units needed in unincorporated areas is estimated to be 5,584. When residential construction through March of 1984 (2,699 units) is deducted from total 1980-90 housing needs, the resulting net need for the 1984-90 period is 2,885 units.

#### **3.1.2 1990-2005 Housing Needs**

Between April 1, 1990 and April 1, 2005, an additional 11,708 housing units will be required to accommodate projected growth in the number of households expected to reside in unincorporated areas.

### **3.2 Constraints and Opportunities for New Housing Production**

Accommodation of total housing production needs for the 1984-90 period would require construction of new units at the rate of 481 per year - 28 percent less than the 1980-84 rate of 675 units per year. If this level of housing production is to be achieved, an adequate supply of vacant sites with access to necessary public services is essential. The land-use policies of the County and public services policies of the County and special districts are principal constraints on the number, location and development potential of available housing sites, although these policies often reflect environmental factors that preclude development, or other public objectives such as preservation of agricultural, open space or scenic resources. Market factors, including land prices, interest rates, and landowner investment objectives and preferences regarding the scale and timing of development also significantly affect the rate and location of housing production. The wide fluctuations in the rate of homebuilding during recent years reflect the strong influence of these market factors.

#### **3.2.1 Supply and Distribution of Sites for New Housing in Unincorporated Areas**

A survey conducted to identify the location, number and development potential of sites suitable for new housing under existing plans and zoning classified these sites in one of three categories:

**Urban sites** are parcels located within the existing boundaries of water and/or sewer service areas which are authorized densities of one or more dwelling units per acre. In some areas, primarily those for which a specific plan has not been adopted in recent years, the survey excluded

**TABLE 3.1: NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS NEEDED, 1980-1990 AND 1980-2005, AND PROJECTED TOTAL YEAR-ROUND UNITS, 1990 AND 2005.**

Planning Area/ City	Existing Units 1980	Additional New Units Needed		Total Projected Units <sup>1</sup>	
		1980-1990	1980-2005	1990	2005
Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin	2,286	548	1,458	2,830	3,740
Cloverdale/N.E.County	3,389	757	2,204	4,150	5,590
Cloverdale City	1,609	522	1,532	2,130	3,140
Unincorporated	1,780	235	672	2,020	2,450
Healdsburg and Environs	7,288	2,775	10,311	10,060	17,600
Healdsburg City	2,928	1,006	3,289	3,930	6,220
Unincorporated	4,360	1,769	7,022	6,130	11,380
Russian River	5,761	480 <sup>2</sup>	1,215 <sup>2</sup>	6,240	6,980
Santa Rosa and Environs	49,642	13,282	31,053	62,920	80,700
Santa Rosa City	34,652	12,340	27,705	46,990	62,360
Unincorporated	14,990	942	3,348	15,930	18,340
Sebastopol and Environs	8,978	834	2,419	9,810	11,400
Sebastopol City	2,435	634	1,976	3,070	4,410
Unincorporated	6,543	200	443	6,740	6,990
R.P./Cotati and Environs	12,133	4,106	9,503	16,240	21,640
Rohnert Park City	8,687	3,414	7,599	12,100	16,290
Cotati City	1,423	484	1,319	1,910	2,740
Unincorporated	2,023	208	585	2,230	2,610
Petaluma and Environs	15,982	4,291	10,243	20,270	26,220
Petaluma City	12,403	3,975	9,481	16,380	21,880
Unincorporated	3,579	316	762	3,890	4,340
Sonoma Valley	11,966	1,900	4,323	13,870	16,290
Sonoma City	2,811	1,014	2,536	3,830	5,350
Unincorporated	9,155	886	1,787	10,040	10,940
<b>COUNTY TOTAL</b>	<b>117,425</b>	<b>28,973</b>	<b>72,729</b>	<b>146,400</b>	<b>190,150</b>
All Cities	66,948	23,389	55,437	90,340	122,380
Unincorporated	50,477	5,584	17,292	56,060	67,770

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department

Notes: 1. Totals for year-round housing units are equal to 1980 units plus 1980-2005 additional units needed, plus or minus adjustments for annexations over the 1980-2005 period (annexation estimates equal 3,060 units between 1980 and 1990, and 6,900 units between 1980 and 2005); all numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

2. Total for Russian River reflects conversions of seasonal/occasional occupancy units to year-round occupancy units (conversion estimates equal 104 units between 1980 and 1990, and 100 units between 1990 and 2005).

vacant parcels smaller than two acres. The data, therefore, underestimates the number of dwellings that may potentially be constructed on sites classified as urban. The data also exclude the majority of lands within the expansion areas of the eight cities, although these lands are commonly designated for development by the County's land-use plans. The number of potential units on vacant urban sites is estimated as the product of a site's acreage and its density (measured in units per acre) as authorized by the applicable specific plan or zoning. "Redevelopment potential" is an estimate of the number of housing units that could be constructed, based upon densities authorized by current land use plans or zoning, on existing parcels of two acres or more which presently have only one or two dwellings.

**Rural sites** are defined as accessible existing parcels, located outside urban service areas, where current land-use plan and zoning designations permit construction of one or more residences. Land-use regulations usually require 1 1/2 acres or more per dwelling, except in areas with a water distribution system where densities as great as one unit per acre may be authorized. Due to limitations on the availability of data, residential development potential is estimated in only a few rural areas, based upon several recently adopted specific plans. In the majority of the rural areas, data from the Assessor's parcel files are used to identify existing vacant parcels with zoning which authorizes residential use. However, development potential in terms of number of units or lots could not be estimated since densities authorized by the zoning are not known. In addition, sites within agricultural or timberland production zoning districts were excluded, although these zonings authorize some residential use. The residential development potential, therefore, in rural areas exceeds by an unknown (but probably sizeable) factor the number of existing vacant parcels identified by the survey.

**Other sites** are accessible, vacant, existing parcels, as identified through property tax assessment records, which cannot be classified based upon available information in either the urban or rural category. It is probable, however, that most of these sites are outside the boundaries of urban service areas.

**Supply of Available Urban Sites for Residential Development.** The survey data indicating available residential building sites and new dwelling unit potential in urban service areas are summarized in Table 3.2. The limitations of the data, briefly identified above, indicate that caution must be exercised in drawing and interpreting conclusions. Countywide, over 2,900 available vacant urban sites with a development potential of about 9,950 new units were identified. An additional 100 or more urban sites with a redevelopment potential of 1,659 units increase the total new dwelling unit potential within the existing boundaries of urban service areas to about 11,600 units. Again, it should be noted that this total does not include potential new dwelling units on vacant parcels smaller than two acres in several of the urban service areas (nor does it include units which could be built as a result of approvals of density bonuses or "secondary units"). For a more detailed presentation and explanation of information from the housing site inventory, refer to the technical supplement to this element.



TABLE 3.2: AVAILABLE SITES FOR NEW HOUSING, IN UNINCORPORATED URBAN SERVICE AREAS: 1984

Permitted Development Density	<u>Vacant Land</u>		<u>Land with Redevelop- ment Potential</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	Sites	Potential Units	Sites	Potential Units	Sites	Potential Units
1-6 units/acre	691	4,539	82+	1,000	773+	5,539
1-8 units/acre	2197	2,517	NA	NA	2,197	2,517
7+ units/acre	21+	2,888	18	659	39+	3,547
Total:	2,909+	9,944	100+	1,659	3,000+	11,603

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department

**Available Rural Sites and Residential Development Potential.** Assessor's parcel records identify over 1,300 vacant sites for new residential construction in rural areas and about 10,800 additional vacant sites that could not be classified as urban or rural (but which are probably mostly rural). It should be reiterated that the total number of rural sites (12,127) does not include parcels with agricultural or timberland production zoning, although they are frequently authorized some residential development potential by plans and zoning. Additional data from several recently adopted specific plans covering rural areas indicates a development potential of 10,174 additional residential units (ie. building sites), based on land divisions consistent with plan land-use designations and zonings. Total rural development potential, including existing vacant parcels and possible new parcels, is about 22,300 units. As noted in Table 3.1, projected demand for new units in unincorporated areas is at 17,292 for the 1980-2005 period. Thus it is clear that rural parcels available for development far exceed projected demand.

**Adequacy of Supply at Available Residential Building Sites.** The sum of the existing vacant rural (including "other") parcels and the additional development potential computed for urban service areas and selected rural areas provides an approximation of the number of housing units that could be constructed on the surveyed lands. This total, about 33,900 dwellings, excludes development potential in areas of the County for which recent specific plans have not been adopted as well as the existing vacant agriculturally-zoned parcels. It is clear, therefore, that the County's existing land-use policies would accommodate many more dwelling units than are projected to be needed through year 2005. Total projected needs -- about 14,590 units from 1984 to 2005 -- could be accommodated without any further subdivision of rural land.

The distribution of available residential building sites by planning area is shown in Table 3.3. These data should be interpreted with caution, especially in the Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Sebastopol, Petaluma, and Sonoma Valley planning areas. These areas have large portions of their rural land area zoned as agricultural -- zonings which are not included in the tabulated sites, although residential uses are permitted. Except for Petaluma, the incorporated portion of each of the planning areas has one or more urban service districts. As noted above, residential development potential within the existing boundaries of these districts was about 11,600 units.

**TABLE 3.3: AVAILABLE SITES FOR NEW HOUSING IN UNINCORPORATED  
AREAS OF SONOMA COUNTY: 1984**

Unincorporated Planning Area/ Urban Service Area	Urban Service Areas <sup>1</sup>				Rural Areas	
	Vacant Land		Redevelopment Land		Additional New Building Sites <sup>2</sup>	Existing Rural Sites <sup>3</sup>
	Number of Sites	Potential Units	Number of Sites	Potential Units		
<b>Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin</b>						
Bodega Bay P.U.D.	698	1,018	NA <sup>4</sup>	NA	--	--
Sea Ranch C.S.A.	1,499	1,499	0	0	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	NA	1,773
<b>Cloverdale/N.E. County</b>						
Geyserville C.S.D.	2	10	1	13	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	NA	395
<b>Healdsburg and Environs</b>						
Windsor C.W.D.	NA	2,983	NA	NA	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	NA	967
<b>Russian River Area</b>						
Forestville C.S.D.	1	11	9	297	--	--
Russian River C.S.D.	585	824	NA	NA	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	NA	1,752
<b>Santa Rosa and Environs</b>						
Airport-Larkfield- Wikiup C.S.A.	30	2,281	NA	NA	--	--
South Park C.S.D.	10	403	39	829	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	5,479	2,959
<b>Sebastopol and Environs</b>						
Graton C.S.D.	1	4	10	53	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	200	1,205
<b>Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs</b>						
Penngrove C.S.A.	48	289	NA	NA	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	NA	307
<b>Petaluma and Environs</b>						
Rural	--	--	--	--	1,840	644
<b>Sonoma Valley</b>						
Sonoma Valley C.S.D.	35	622	41	467	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	2,655	2,125
<b>Total</b>						
<b>Urban Service Areas</b>	<b>2,909+</b>	<b>9,944</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>10,174</b>	<b>12,127</b>

- Notes: (1) Sources: Sonoma County Dept. of Public Works billing records and/or adopted specific plans; in some instances, data is not included for parcels smaller than 2 acres.
- (2) Sources: Estimates of additional lots or units permitted by the land-use policies and maps following specific plans: Bennett Valley, Franz Valley, Green Valley, Hessel, North Santa Rosa, South Santa Rosa, West Santa Rosa, North Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Mountain, South Sonoma Valley Areas 3 and 4, West Petaluma and West Sebastopol.
- (3) Source: County Tax Assessor's records indicating vacant parcels; agriculture and timber production lands are excluded; includes rural sites, plus "other" sites which are probably rural.
- (4) NA means not available.

DN: HETBL3.3

### 3.2.2 Adequacy of Urban Public Services

Available sites for new housing which are located within urban service areas cannot be developed without adequate water, sewage collection and treatment and other public services. Clean, affordable and adequate water distribution systems are a prerequisite for additional residential development within these areas. The current status of these services in unincorporated urban service areas is summarized in the following paragraphs.

**Water Services** The two principal sources of drinking water in Sonoma County are the Russian River and wells owned by water companies or individuals. All urban service areas of the county except Windsor, Occidental, Geyserville, Graton, Bodega Bay and Sea Ranch receive Russian River water, with distribution administered by the Sonoma County Water Agency. The current Russian River entitlement of 98 million gallons per day (MGD) is sufficient to serve projected future demand through year 1990; the SCWA estimates that additional supply from the Warm Springs Reservoir will accommodate projected growth through the year 2017. Any future service problems should involve distribution rather than supply issues.

There are 206 water systems currently operating in the county; 177 of these serve fewer than 200 customers and are regulated by the County's Public Health Department, while 29 serve more than 200 customers and are regulated by the California Department of Public Health (DOH) and Public Utilities Commission. Of the smaller systems, 25 are currently subject to moratoriums on new connections. Among the larger water systems serving unincorporated urban areas, only the Penngrove system has serious problems that may constrain the availability of water service for new development. This privately-owned system is subject to a DOH moratorium on new connections due to substandard water pressure and quality. Although recent improvements have resolved pressure problems in some areas, the entire system may require major renovation or replacement due to age and obsolescence. The County is participating in a feasibility study to identify options for the future ownership, improvement and operation of this system.

Although a number of small rural systems have problems related to the quality or quantity of water supply and adequacy of distribution facilities, those systems serving urban areas other than Penngrove have minimal supply or distribution problems that constrain new residential development. The costs of needed storage and distribution facilities are primarily financed by connection fees, which in 1984 ranged from zero in Larkfield and Geyserville to \$2,065/unit in Forestville. Where Sonoma County Water Agency water is not available, the adequacy of water distribution systems should be considered in siting new housing.

**Sewage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal Services.** Twelve sanitation districts administered by five administrative entities provide sewer services in unincorporated urban areas of the county. The principal indicator of a system's ability to serve growth is the percentage of dry weather capacity required to serve existing development. When total daily dry weather flows exceed 75 percent of dry weather design capacity, the operator is required to



notify the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and prepare a plan for serving projected growth without exceeding the 75 percent criterion. Such notifications are also required if a system releases untreated wastewater, or if the quality of treated effluent falls below prescribed standards. The purpose of the 75 percent notification requirement is to provide sufficient "lead time" for the planning and construction of new facilities. In Sonoma County, only one system has filed such a notification (Wikiup, currently operating at 89 percent of capacity), although the Windsor Water District and Sonoma Valley Sanitation District are operating at close to 75 percent of capacity. In all other systems, at least 25 percent of dry weather design capacity remains to serve short-term growth. It is the County's intent to develop a reliable mechanism to monitor dry weather capacity and ensure adequate holding and disposal areas to prevent environmental and economic damage when accommodating new growth.

The overall ability of districts serving unincorporated urban areas to finance facilities to accommodate growth has been greatly influenced by the availability of federal funding. The Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 provided such funding, but limited consideration of future service needs to a ten year period. Most Clean Water funds were disbursed in the 1970's, and in Sonoma County the last of the Clean Water funds are currently being used to upgrade facilities in the Occidental CSD and to help construct a new treatment plant serving the Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup area. Unless new federal or state programs provide financing, future expansions of existing facilities will have to be funded at the local level through bond issues, assessment districts, connection fees, or some combination of these methods. The increased reliance on local resources is demonstrated by connection fees, which in 1984 ranged from \$1,500/unit in the Russian River CSD to \$4,300/unit in those portions of CSA 31 (Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup) not included in Assessment District #1.

**Education Services.** Availability of funds for construction and operation of public school facilities is difficult to assess, due to uncertainties regarding future revenues from property taxes and state and federal budgets. California law (Government Code, Section 65970 et. seq.) assists school districts severely affected by rapid growth by allowing local governments to require the dedication of land or the payment of impact fees by developers of residential units. However, the land or fees may only be used to provide interim facilities for a maximum period of five years. In 1984, seven of the 48 school districts in the county used this provision of state law to collect impact fees ranging from \$660 to \$1270 per unit.

### **3.3 Housing Supply, Location and Geographic Distribution: County Objectives and Policies**

The total need for new housing units in unincorporated areas of the county over the six-year period from April 1, 1984 to April 1, 1990 is 2,885 units. A small portion of total need - estimated at 104 units - could be satisfied by conversion of seasonal units to year-round occupancy. These opportunities are reflected in county objectives.

**Objective 3A: Supply of New Housing Units**

**Addresses Goal(s): 1 and 2**

It is the County's objective to encourage construction of 2,885 new housing units in unincorporated portions of Sonoma County between April 1, 1984 and March 31, 1990.

**Policy 3A1: Provision of Adequate Public Services**

**Program Reference(s): 1-5 and 7**

It is the County's policy to support and require the provision of public services where appropriate within designated urban service areas at levels adequate to meet the needs of existing households and accommodate projected new households. Since the need for such infrastructure far exceeds the County's available financial resources, it is the County's policy to require fair-share contributions from new development.

**Policy 3A2: Funding of Public Services**

**Program Reference(s): 1-4, 10**

Within designated urban service areas, it is the County's policy to finance improvements of public facilities and services needed to accommodate the projected residential growth using any available federal or state programs, connection fees, benefit assessment districts, revenue bonds, or a combination of the above. In choosing among financing alternatives, it is the County's policy to select measures that minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on housing costs, particularly those of existing low- and moderate-income residents.

**Policy 3A3: Financial Assistance To Stimulate New Housing Production**

**Program Reference(s): 6, 13-17, 20-21 and 29**

It is the policy of the County to use available federal and state funding programs to provide financial assistance for the purpose of promoting production of new housing for low- and moderate-income sectors of the market for which builders and developers would not find new construction feasible without assistance.

**Objective 3B: Geographic Distribution of New Construction**

**Addresses Goal(s): 2**

It is the County's objective to encourage the distribution of new residential construction among the nine planning areas in a manner that reflects the projected distribution of employment opportunities and new households, as shown in Table 3-1.

**Objective 3C: Emphasis on Residential Development Within Urban Service Areas**

**Addresses Goal(s): 2 and 3**

It is the County of Sonoma's objective that the majority of new units to be constructed in unincorporated areas by 1990 be located within urban service areas where water and sewer services are available.

**Policy 3C1: Priority Areas for Urban Residential Development**  
**Program Reference(s): 1-5**

In its specific plan program and in considering rezoning requests, it is the County's policy to encourage "infill" development of vacant and underutilized land within existing urban service areas before authorizing expansions of the boundaries of such areas. Where expansion of an existing urban service area appears appropriate, in order to accommodate projected growth, the location, scale and potential environmental effects of the expansion shall be assessed within the context of the applicable specific plan.

**Policy 3C2: Residential Use Policy in Resource Areas**  
**Program Reference(s): 1-3**

It is the policy of the County that lands located within the resource-related land-use categories of the land-use element -- including undeveloped, general agriculture, orchards and vineyards, and agriculture and residential -- shall not be authorized additional residential use by specific plans and zonings, except as such new residences are ancillary to and supportive of the resource use.

**Policy 3C3: Rural Residential Use Policy**  
**Program Reference(s): 1-3**

It is the policy of Sonoma County that the major share of nonurban residential development in unincorporated areas be authorized on lands which are designated within the "rural residential" category by the land-use element. Densities authorized by the land-use element may range from one unit per acre to one unit per five acres for these lands. It is the County's policy that the land area designated for rural residential use not be expanded by General or Specific plan amendments, specific plans, or rezonings, but that future growth be accommodated through build-out on lands already designated for this use.



#### 4.0 HOUSING COSTS: INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE TO LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

For low- and moderate-income households, high housing prices and rents frequently mean that they must pay such a large share of their budget for housing that many other necessities must be sacrificed. The only alternative in many cases may be occupancy of deteriorated and sub-standard housing or in extreme situations no housing at all. Adequate, safe, and healthful shelter is an important aspect of the physical and emotional well-being of low- and moderate-income individuals and families, just as it is for those of greater means. It is in the interest of the County of Sonoma that households with insufficient incomes not suffer either housing deprivation or loss of other necessities. In meeting this basic need, the County will seek to expand the quantity of housing units that are available at prices and rents affordable to those with low or moderate income. Such housing may be provided through new construction and especially from the stock of existing older dwellings. The County will also provide financial assistance to low- and moderate-income households to offset a portion of their housing expense, to the extent that funds for this purpose are available from state and federal sources.

##### 4.1 The Affordable Housing Problem

For purposes of the Housing Element, the following definitions shall be used in estimating the extent of the need for housing with prices or rents affordable to low- and moderate-income households and in assessing proposals for constructing or providing affordable housing:

Income Levels. Four levels, based on guidelines used by state and federal agencies, are employed:

<u>Household Income Category</u>	<u>Percent of County Median Household Income</u>
Very Low	Less than 50%
Low (or Lower)	Less than 80%
Moderate	80% to 120%
Low and Moderate	Less than 120%
Above Moderate	More than 120%

Household Income - The sum of all monetary income received regularly by all household members over 15 years of age, including wages, salaries, self-employment income, farm income, social security and pension income, interest and dividends, prior to tax and other deductions. In any particular year, median household incomes for each household size category shall be considered to be the same as that specified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD).

Housing Costs (for owners) - mortgage principal and interest, property taxes, insurance and utilities (electricity, gas and water).

Housing Costs (for renters) - gross rent, which includes "contract" rent (ie. the nominal rent agreed to by tenant and landlord) and utilities (electricity, gas and water).

Excessive Housing Costs - housing costs that exceed 30 percent of the income of low- and moderate-income households.

These income and housing-cost definitions are compatible with those of the Bureau of the Census, ensuring that housing cost and income relationships can be evaluated with each new Census. The housing costs definition for renters assumes that mortgage costs, taxes and insurance are components of contract rent. Maintenance costs, which are a component of contract rent, are excluded from the definition of owner costs.

Based on these definitions and using countywide median household income data for 1979 (\$17,734) from the Census and 1984 (\$28,400) from DHUD, the following affordable mortgage payment/rent schedule can be computed:

Income Level	Annual Income		Monthly Payment/Rent	
	1979	1984	1979	1984
Very Low	Less than \$ 8,867	\$14,150	Less than \$222	\$354
Lower	Less than \$14,187	\$22,720	Less than \$355	\$568
Moderate	Less than \$21,281	\$34,080	Less than \$532	\$852
Above Moderate	More than \$21,281	\$34,080	More than \$532	\$852

Most local, state, and federal housing programs refine the above schedule by adjusting affordable payments/rents by household size. However, since the Bureau of the Census suppresses some data for confidentiality reasons, the simplified definitions presented above are employed for analytical purposes in this element (they reflect income thresholds for a family of four). Their analytical use herein is not intended to supercede the more detailed criteria of local, state or federal programs.

#### 4.1.1 Needs For New Affordable Housing Units: 1984-90

Table 4.1 shows the projected number of housing units needed at affordable price and rent levels to accommodate projected household growth between 1980 and 1990. The distribution of new households by income level has been estimated by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); the net need for new housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households is determined by deducting affordable housing units constructed between April 1, 1980 and March 31, 1984. This procedure assumes that the shelter needs of new households with insufficient incomes will be accommodated through occupancy of new units; however, most such households are likely to obtain their housing services from the stock of existing less-expensive units.

**TABLE 4.1: NET NEED FOR AFFORDABLE LOW-AND  
MODERATE-INCOME HOUSING UNITS IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF SONOMA COUNTY: 1984-1990  
(HIGH ESTIMATE)**

UNINCORPORATED AREA <sup>1</sup>	INCOME LEVEL <sup>2</sup>			TOTAL (%) <sup>3</sup>
	Very Low	Lower	Moderate	
SONOMA COAST/GUALALA BASIN				
Total Need: 1980-90	143	99	115	357 (9.8)
Construction: 1980-84 <sup>4</sup>	9 <sup>5</sup>	9 <sup>5</sup>	0	18 (0.5)
Net Need: 1984-90	134	90	115	339 (9.3)
CLOVERDALE/N.E. COUNTY				
Total Need: 1980-90	61	42	49	152 (4.2)
Construction: 1980-84	0	0	0	0 (0.0)
Net Need: 1984-90	61	42	49	152 (4.2)
HEALDSBURG ENVIRONS				
Total Need: 1980-90	460	318	372	1,150 (31.7)
Construction: 1980-84	3	58	2	63 (1.7)
Net Need: 1984-90	457	260	370	1,087 (30.0)
RUSSIAN RIVER				
Total Need: 1980-90	125	86	101	312 (8.6)
Construction: 1980-84	0	0	0	0 (0.0)
Net Need: 1984-90	125	86	101	312 (8.6)
SANTA ROSA ENVIRONS				
Total Need: 1980-90	245	170	198	611 (16.8)
Construction: 1980-84	40 <sup>5</sup>	40 <sup>5</sup>	17	97 (2.7)
Net Need: 1984-90	205	130	181	514 (14.1)
SEBASTOPOL ENVIRONS				
Total Need: 1980-90	52	36	42	130 (3.6)
Construction: 1980-84	2	10	0	12 (0.3)
Net Need: 1984-90	50	26	42	118 (3.3)
ROHNERT PARK/COTATI ENVIRONS				
Total Need: 1980-90	54	37	44	135 (3.7)
Construction: 1980-84	0	0	0	0 (0.0)
Total Need: 1984-90	54	37	44	135 (3.7)
PETALUMA ENVIRONS				
Total Need: 1980-90	82	57	66	205 (5.7)
Construction: 1980-84	0	0	0	0 (0.0)
Net Need: 1984-90	82	57	66	205 (5.7)
SONOMA VALLEY				
Total Need: 1980-90	230	160	186	576 (15.9)
Construction: 1980-84	2	34	24	60 (1.7)
Net Need: 1984-90	228	126	162	516 (14.2)
COUNTY TOTALS				
Total Need: 1980-90	1,452	1,005	1,173	3,630 (100.0)
Construction: 1980-84	56	151	43	250 (6.9)
Net Need: 1984-90	1,396	854	1,130	3,380 (93.1)

Notes:

- (1) All dates are April 1 - March 31.
- (2) See text for definitions of income levels.
- (3) Percent of total.
- (4) Includes only units constructed between 1980 and 1984 whose occupancy was restricted to low-and moderate-income households, through governmental programs; excludes "affordable" housing produced by the market.
- (5) Assumes occupancy split evenly between lower and very low income households.



Undoubtedly, a portion of the uncounted units constructed between 1980 and 1984 were affordable for moderate, or even lower income households. Since no data are available to determine costs or rents for these units, Table 4.1 should be viewed as a very high estimate of 1984-90 projected potential need for new affordable units.

#### **4.1.2 Housing Affordability Problems of Existing Households, 1980**

Table 4.2 presents Census data which estimate the number and percentage of households at each income level that paid over 30 percent of their annual income for housing in 1980. Information is presented separately for owner and renter households, and for the cities and unincorporated areas of the county. These data are subject to three qualifications:

- (1) Data shown are for "specified" owner-and renter-occupied units only. As defined by the Census, specified units exclude dwellings on parcels of 10 or more acres. Since there were 94,747 "specified" renter and owner households countywide in 1980, this means that data for 19,727 households (17.2 percent of 114,474 total households) are not reflected in Table 4.2).
- (2) Data for "specified" owner-occupied housing exclude households living in condominiums.
- (3) Income levels are based on family of four.

**Ownership Sector.** Slightly more than one-third of all low- and moderate-income homeowners residing in unincorporated areas paid more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing expenses in 1980, as shown in Table 4-2. Nearly twelve percent of homeowner households with above-moderate incomes also had excessive housing expenditures relative to their incomes. The number of over-paying low- and moderate-income owner households was nearly 4,000 in 1980. As could be expected, those households in the very low-income category were more likely to expend an excessive share of their income for housing than were households in the other income categories; nearly one-half of the "very low" income households had excessive expenditure-to-income ratios while just over one-fourth of the moderate-income owners experienced this problem. The low- and moderate-income homeowner households residing in the county's eight cities experience the problem of excessive housing costs at about the same frequency as do households with similar incomes in the unincorporated area. It is likely that many very low- and lower-income households pay a portion of homeowner costs from their accumulated savings rather than from current income.

TABLE 4.2: HOUSEHOLDS WITH EXCESSIVE HOUSING EXPENDITURES RELATIVE TO INCOME, CITIES AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF SONOMA COUNTY, 1980

Area/Income Category	Renter Households With Excessive E:I Ratio			Owner Households With Excessive E:I Ratio			All Households Excessive E:I Ratio	
	Number of Households	Percent of all Renters In Income Category	Percent of all Households In Income Category	Number of Households	Percent of all Owners In Income Category	Percent of all Households In Income Category	Number of Households	Percent of all Households In Income Category
<u>Unincorporated Areas</u>								
Low and Moderate:	5,675	50.7%	25.2%	3,971	35.1%	17.6%	9,646	42.8%
Very Low	3,665	70.5%	40.8%	1,774	46.8%	19.7%	5,439	60.5%
Lower	1,532	47.1%	24.0%	1,023	32.8%	16.1%	2,555	40.1%
Moderate	478	17.5%	6.7%	1,174	26.6%	16.4%	1,652	23.1%
Above Moderate	76	2.6%	0.5%	1,393	11.5%	9.4%	1,469	9.9%
Total: All Incomes	5,751	40.9%	15.3%	5,364	22.9%	14.3%	11,115	29.6%
<u>Cities</u>								
Low and Moderate:	11,242	58.2%	34.3%	4,835	36.0%	14.8%	16,077	49.1%
Very Low	7,076	81.3%	54.9%	2,000	47.8%	15.5%	9,076	70.4%
Lower	3,038	55.6%	34.1%	1,241	36.0%	13.9%	4,279	48.0%
Moderate	1,128	21.9%	10.3%	1,594	27.4%	14.5%	2,722	24.8%
Above Moderate	126	2.2%	0.5%	2,081	11.1%	8.5%	2,207	9.0%
Total: All Incomes	11,368	45.2%	19.8%	6,916	21.5%	12.1%	18,284	31.9%

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, based upon tabulations of data from STF 3A, Bureau of the Census

**Renter Sector.** In 1980, almost 5,700 low- and moderate-income renter households residing in unincorporated areas paid rents which exceeded 30 percent of their income -- more than one-half of all such households. A greater share (50.7%) of low- and moderate-income renters had excessive housing costs than did low- and moderate-income homeowners (35.1%). Among very low-income renters, more than seven out of every ten households experienced excessive costs, while very few (2.6%) households with above-moderate incomes suffered this problem. Low- and moderate-income renters residing in the county's eight cities were more likely to have excessive housing costs than were similar households in the unincorporated area (58.2% and 50.7%, respectively). This difference is accounted for by a greater quantity of low-rent units in some less-accessible rural areas. The problem of excessive housing costs is especially acute for very low- and lower-income renters, regardless of location, since they frequently have not accumulated any savings and are vulnerable to rent increases.

**Total Unmet Need: 1980.** The total number of low- and moderate-income households living in unincorporated areas and having housing affordability problems in 1980 was 9,646 or about 42.8 percent of all such households. About six out of every ten households with this problem were renters. The problem of excessive housing expenditures was especially severe for very low-income households and affected about 60.5 percent of these households. A somewhat higher share (49.1%) of low- and moderate-income households residing in the eight cities experienced excessive housing costs than did comparable households in the unincorporated area (42.8%).

#### **4.2 Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing: Constraints and Opportunities**

There are two basic approaches towards resolving the problem of low- and moderate-income households which pay an excessive share of their income for housing. First, efforts may be addressed to reducing the costs to housing suppliers of providing housing services. These efforts may focus on reduction of costs of constructing new dwellings and/or reduction in the costs of providing housing services from the existing stock. Although some cost-reduction measures may benefit housing producers or households with above-moderate incomes, the usual practice is to require that any governmentally-assisted cost-reductions be passed along to low- and moderate-income housing consumers. This may be accomplished by designing policies and programs which require a housing supplier to market all, or a portion of, the units in an assisted project to low- and moderate-income households at prices or rents which will not result in their having excessive housing expenditure:income ratios. The second basic approach is to provide financial assistance to low- and moderate-income households in order to pay a portion of their monthly housing costs. The effect is to reduce the housing expenditures that are required from the household's own budget. This section examines the various components of housing production costs in order to assess the extent to which potential governmental programs may contribute to cost reductions.



#### 4.2.1 The Costs of Producing Housing

**The Costs of New Construction.** Table 4.3 shows production costs per unit in 1984 for a 1200 square foot detached single-family unit and a 900 square foot condominium in a multi-unit structure, both in 20-unit subdivisions. The cost estimates assume:

- a site in the unincorporated area which has urban services;
- a relatively level building site with no extraordinary development constraints;
- existing zoning that permits the indicated density; and no requirement for an environmental impact report.

These project prototypes are intended to reflect costs being paid in 1984 by residential developers. Land costs are an estimated average for unincorporated urban service areas based on a survey of local realtors; site improvement and construction costs are based on cost data from recent local projects. The housing prototypes reflect basic rather than luxury units, with sizes somewhat smaller than those currently being produced by the market, and minimal amenities. Local fees are expressed as ranges so as to reflect the variation in development fees currently found in unincorporated urban areas of the county. These ranges are carried through in construction financing, profit/overhead and marketing costs.

The range of sales prices per dwelling unit is intended to show:

- the minimum price per unit in the lowest fee areas of the county; and
- the minimum price per unit in the highest fee areas of the county.

The minimum and maximum sales prices shown in Table 4.3 must be interpreted with caution and are intended to be illustrative; actual costs for specific projects will vary.

#### **The Costs of Owning and Renting Existing Units**

**Sales Price Trends: Ownership Sector.** Census data indicate that the median value of owner-occupied units in 1980 was \$88,400. This was an increase of 339 percent over the 1970 median of \$20,100, for an effective annual appreciation rate of nearly 16 percent. Data from the Sonoma County Multiple Listing Service (MLS) indicate that the mean price of all units sold countywide in April 1980 was \$88,100, a figure that corresponds almost exactly with Census data on unit value. In April 1984, the MLS reported a countywide mean sales price of \$120,300, an increase of 36.6 percent over the 1980 mean. Monthly payments would range from \$1,180-1,430 for a home with the average price, depending on the amount of downpayment and the type of financing used. The limited data that are available generally indicate a dramatic slowing of the rate of appreciation in the 1980's, compared to the previous decade.

Other MLS data indicate that the average sales price of homes in several areas of the county (including incorporated cities) declined somewhat between 1983 and 1984. Since the decreases occurred during a period when conventional mortgage interest rates were relatively stable at around 14 percent, they may be attributed to price-cutting intended to encourage sales.

**TABLE 4.3: ILLUSTRATIVE PER UNIT PRODUCTION COSTS FOR 20 UNIT SUBDIVISION,  
1984 IN 1984 DOLLARS**

	Detached 1200 Sq. Ft. Single Family	(%) <sup>1</sup>	900 Sq. Ft. Condominium	(%) <sup>1</sup>
ST:	\$12,500 <sup>2</sup>	(14.4-13.7)	\$9,375 <sup>3</sup>	(14.2-13.4)
CONSTRUCTION COSTS:				
Improvements <sup>4</sup>	\$14,400	(16.5-15.8)	\$ 9,000	(13.7-12.8)
Construction <sup>5</sup>	33,600	(38.6-36.8)	25,200	(38.3-35.9)
1: Direct Costs	\$48,000	(55.1-52.6)	34,200	(52.0-48.7)
T COSTS:				
gn	\$ 600	(0.7)	\$ 1,800	(2.7-2.5)
l Fees <sup>6</sup>	3,635-6,855	(4.2-7.5)	3,495-6,715	(5.3-9.6)
1: Indirect Costs	4,235-7,455	(4.9-8.2)	5,295-8,515	(8.0-12.1)
NG COSTS: <sup>7</sup>				
ts and Fees	3,010-3,125	(3.5-3.4)	2,400-2,530	(3.7-3.6)
rest	4,130-4,335	(4.7-4.8)	3,115-3,325	(4.7-4.7)
1: Financing Costs	7,140-7,460	(8.2-8.2)	5,515-5,855	(8.4-8.3)
1: Above Costs	\$71,875-75,415	(82.6)	\$54,385-57,945	(82.6)
AND OVERHEAD <sup>8</sup>	\$10,780-11,310	(12.4)	8,160-8,690	(12.4)
NG <sup>9</sup>	4,350-4,565	(5.0)	3,290-3,505	(5.0)
PRICE	\$87,005-91,290	(100.0)	\$65,835-70,140	(100.0)

Percent of sales price; all numbers rounded.

4.0 acres R1 Zoning, developed at 5 units/acre; sales price: \$62,500/acre.

1.66 acres R3 Zoning developed at 12 units/acre; sales price: \$112,500/acre.

Includes staking, soils engineering, grading, streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street signs, lights and trees, utility mains and laterals, fencing, landscaping and mailboxes.

Labor and materials at \$28 per square foot.

See Table 4.6.

At 13.75% plus 3 points; assumes 9-month development period.

At 15% of land, direct, indirect and financing costs.

At 5% of sales price.

Rent Trends: Rental Sector. In 1980, median countywide gross rent (including utilities) was \$289. Rent trends since 1980 have been indentified in two surveys, conducted in 1982 and 1984 by the Santa Rosa Housing Authority and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission. The surveys consisted of a random sampling of 1,246 rental units (71 single-family units and 1,175 multi-family units) and included allocations for utility costs.

**TABLE 4.4: SONOMA COUNTY MEDIAN RENTS: 1982-84**

<u>Unit Size</u>	<u>Single-Family</u>			<u>Multi-Family</u>		
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
Studio	--	--	--	\$280	\$400	42.8%
1 Bedroom	--	\$375	--	\$290	\$420	44.8%
2 Bedroom	\$400	\$425	6.3%	\$350	\$440	25.7%
3 Bedroom	\$450	\$510	13.3%	\$425	\$565	32.9%
4 Bedroom	\$548	\$578	5.5%	--	--	--

Source: Santa Rosa Housing Authority and Sonoma County Community Development Commission.

Table 4.4 shows the results of the surveys; median rents for the various sizes of single-family units increased an average of 8.4 percent while median rents for multi-family units increased an average of 36.6 percent. The latter rate of increase exceeded the change in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index (+10.85%) over the same period. A follow-up newspaper survey by the Planning Department in 1984 indicated that a high proportion (91.6%) of the units affordable for very low-income households were studio and one-bedroom units, indicating that very low-income households of more than two persons have substantial difficulty in finding affordable housing without overcrowding. This trend was less pronounced for very low- and lower-income households, for which about one-half of all rental units were affordable in 1984. These households also had more choice in terms of unit size, with studio and one bedroom units comprising 35.5 percent of the units affordable for the lower-income group.

The disparity in rates of increase between single-family and multi-family units is also significant. Since units in the multi-unit and duplex categories in urban areas are more likely to be occupied by very low- and lower-income households, these income groups have probably been more adversely affected by recent rent increases than have moderate-income households. Timing of rent increases, as well as average annual rates, is important. The Sonoma County



Rental Information and Mediation Services (SCRIMS) has received reports of increases of as much as 100 percent with only the 30-day legal minimum notice to tenants. Although such increases typically occur after long periods of stable rents, or after sale of rental property, their impact on low- and moderate-income tenants can be severe. Impacts are intensified by high moving costs, which typically include any net loss on deposits from the current rental unit and payment of first and last month's rent plus deposits on the new unit in addition to the costs of moving household goods.

#### **4.2.2 Market Factors Influencing Housing Costs and Affordability**

**Land Costs.** A 1984 survey by the Planning Department indicated that residential land prices ranged from \$50-75,000 per acre for unimproved urban sites zoned for development at five units/acre, \$90-120,000 for unimproved urban land zoned for development at 15 units per acre, and \$10-50,000 per acre for rural single-family home sites -- depending on zoning, location and amenities. Little data on price trends are available, but indications are that an improved 6,000 square foot lot appreciated in value from about \$6,000 in 1972 to \$30,000 in 1984 - yielding an effective annual appreciation rate of 14.4 percent. Table 4.3 shows that land costs comprise from 13.4 to 14.4 percent of the total cost of the urban housing prototype; in rural areas on a 1.5-acre site, land costs could account for as much as 45 percent of housing costs.

**Construction Costs.** These costs cover site improvements necessary to prepare a site for residential development as well as the actual costs of labor and materials for the dwelling. Over the past four years, site improvement costs in the Bay Area (as measured by Bank of America) have increased at 9.2 percent per year and unit construction costs have increased at 6.0 percent per year, compared to an increase of 6.8 percent per year in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index. Market opportunities for reducing these costs include:

Manufactured housing. If a mobile home, the predominant form of manufactured housing, were substituted for the minimum price single-family unit in Table 4.3, the sales price would be reduced about seven percent to \$81,550.

"Downsizing" If the minimum price units in Table 4.3 were reduced in size by 200 square feet, the price of the single-family unit could be reduced 8.6 percent to \$79,540, and the price of the condominium could be reduced 11.4 percent to \$58,315.

**Financing Costs.** Average interest rates for home mortgages, based on summary data collected by a local title company, have fluctuated considerably over the past five years. In January 1980, rates for a 30 year, fixed rate loan averaged 13.1 percent with a loan-to-value ratio of 0.9. Rates peaked at 18.2 percent in October 1981, but declined to 13.1 percent by April 1984. In the latter part of 1984, rates crept upwards to 14 percent for fixed rate loans and initial rates averaged 11.1 percent for adjustable rate (ARM) loans. Monthly payments resulting from prevailing rates in late 1984 (including

impounds for taxes and insurance, but excluding utility costs) are shown in Table 4.5. All of these loans were available to qualifying households. Sales prices in the table are based on:

- the mean (average) sales price of all homes sold in Sonoma County in April 1984 (\$120,300 per MLS);
- the minimum sales price for a new 1200 square foot detailed single-family unit, from Table 4.3; and
- the minimum sales price for a 900 square foot condominium in a multi-unit structure from Table 4.3.

Table 4.5 shows that production costs and interest rates prevailing in 1984 excluded very low- income households from the market for new owner-occupied units. Disregarding the effect of lower construction financing rates on sales prices, mortgage rates would have had to fall to about four percent before the multi-unit condominium prototype would be affordable to these income levels. Given ARM financing, the single family unit was just within the affordability range of moderate-income households, although addition of an allocation for monthly utility bills would push total payments past the \$352 threshold for this income group. The average-priced resale unit would not be affordable for any low- or moderate-income household, but undoubtedly a large proportion of the existing units would have resale prices below \$120,300 and could be affordable for moderate-income homebuyers. The effects of high housing prices and mortgage interest rates are most severe for first-time buyers, since any household with equity from the sale of a previous residence could use these funds to increase the downpayment and thereby lower monthly payments.

The effects of interest rates on the level of income required to qualify for a home loan are illustrated in Table 4.6. For a house priced at about \$87,000, the monthly payments range from \$800 with a 10 percent mortgage loan to \$1,170 with a 16 percent loan (assuming a loan to value ratio of 0.9). In 1984, the monthly payment at 10 percent would require an annual income of \$32,000, 113% of the county's 1984 median household income; with an increase in interest rates to 12 percent, the home would no longer be considered "affordable", since an income higher than 120 percent of median income would be necessary to qualify for a home loan. For the \$87,000 home, each additional two percentage points on the mortgage interest rate necessitate an additional \$5,000 of household income in order to qualify for the loan. Short-term fluctuations in interest rates obviously have a substantial impact on the number of households that can afford to purchase new or existing housing.

**Market Factors and Residential Rents.** Since any housing unit can be rented, the preceding evaluations of land, construction and financing costs are also relevant to the rental sector. Renters are vulnerable to changing interest rates as well, since rental units can be refinanced or sold with little notice. Current residential rents reflect the sales price of a unit, plus the costs of financing, taxes, insurance, maintenance, utilities, and other operating costs paid by the owner, as well as profit. These costs vary

TABLE 4.5: ILLUSTRATIVE FINANCING COSTS

	<u>Detached Single Family House</u>				<u>Multi-unit Condominium</u>	
<u>Sales Price</u>	<u>\$120,300</u>		<u>\$87,005</u>		<u>\$65,835</u>	
	<u>Down, Points &amp; Closing Costs</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>Monthly Payment</u> <sup>3</sup>	<u>Down, Points &amp; Closing Costs</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>Monthly Payment</u> <sup>3</sup>	<u>Down, Points &amp; Closing Costs</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>Monthly Payment</u> <sup>3</sup>
ed, conventional (% + 2 pts.)	\$15,995 <sup>4</sup>	\$1,430	\$12,015 <sup>4</sup>	\$1,045	\$9,070 <sup>4</sup>	\$780
203b, ed (% + 1 pt.)	\$33,000 <sup>5</sup>	\$1,215	\$ 6,430 <sup>6</sup>	\$1,100	\$4,720 <sup>6</sup>	\$825
ustainable (%+2 pts.)	\$15,995 <sup>4</sup>	\$1,180	\$12,015 <sup>4</sup>	\$ 860	\$9,070 <sup>4</sup>	\$645

Notes:

- (1) All numbers rounded.
- (2) All closing costs based on 1984 FHA requirements.
- (3) Includes property tax and mortgage/hazard insurance impounds of \$149 for \$120,300 unit, \$115 for \$87,005 unit and \$80 for \$65,835 unit.
- (4) Assumes 10% down payment.
- (5) High down payment reflects FHA loan maximum of \$90,000. Impounds not required, but \$150 added to reflect actual costs for taxes and insurance.
- (6) FHA minimum down payment = 3% of first \$25,000, 5% of balance.

DN: HEACT.FC



TABLE 4.6: THE IMPACT OF MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES ON MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME REQUIRED TO QUALIFY FOR A HOME MORTGAGE

Interest Rate	Detached Single-Family House \$120,300			Detached Single-Family House \$87,005			Condominium in Multi-unit Structure \$65,835		
	Monthly Payment <sup>3</sup>	Income Required <sup>4</sup>	Income Required as Percent of Median <sup>5</sup>	Monthly Payment	Income Required	Income Required as Percent of Median	Monthly Payment	Income Required	Income Required as Percent of Median
10%	\$1,100	\$44,000	155%	\$ 800	\$32,000	113%	\$600	\$24,000	85%
12%	\$1,265	\$50,600	178%	\$ 920	\$36,800	130%	\$690	\$27,600	97%
14%	\$1,430	\$57,200	201%	\$1,045	\$41,800	147%	\$780	\$31,200	110%
16%	\$1,605	\$64,200	226%	\$1,170	\$46,800	165%	\$875	\$35,000	123%
18%	\$1,780	\$71,200	251%	\$1,295	\$51,800	182%	\$975	\$39,000	137%

Notes: (1) All numbers rounded.

(2) Per Table 4.5.

(3) Assumes 10 percent down payment; includes property tax and mortgage/hazard insurance imposts of \$149 for \$120,300 unit, \$115 for \$87,005 unit and \$80 for \$65,835 unit.

(4) Income required for monthly payments to equal 30% of gross household income.

(5) Based on 1984 countywide median income of \$28,400.

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department

considerably for the existing rental stock, but there is a tendency in the market for rents on comparable units to fall within a relatively narrow range, regardless of costs. For example, residential rent survey data show that 60 percent of all two bedroom apartments advertised in April 1984 rented for \$425-550 per month.

The minimum rent which would be necessary in order to make construction of a new two-bedroom apartment feasible for investors has been estimated from data in Table 4.3 by preparing a discounted cash flow analysis for a five-year investment period, using the following assumptions:

- Minimum-price condominium unit in Table 4.3 downsized to 825 square feet resulting in a per unit acquisition cost of \$56,825 (assuming zero marketing costs), yielding an acquisition price of \$1,136,500 for a 20-unit project.
- Acquisition financed by a 30-year fixed-rate loan at 13 percent plus 3 points, a loan to value ratio of 0.7 and \$4,000 in closing costs; this results in an initial investment of \$369,135, and annual principal and interest payments of \$106,135.
- Realistic assumptions regarding annual expenses such as property taxes, insurance, maintenance and repair, utilities, and management costs; on the revenue side, rents were assumed to increase five percent annually, and an allowance was made for vacancies (five percent of gross rent).
- Liquidation of the investment at the end of the five-year period, with the project appreciating in value five percent annually.
- An investor in the 50 percent tax bracket who requires an after-tax return-on-investment of 18 percent.

These assumptions result in an initial monthly per unit rent of \$505, increasing to \$615 in the fifth year. This rent range meshes well with rent survey data for multi-unit apartments and duplex units. However, actual rents would be higher if the project is located in a desirable area, if operating costs are higher than assumed, or if the investor seeks a higher rate of return.

#### **4.2.3 Governmental Factors Influencing Housing Costs and Affordability**

**Residential Land-use and Density Policies.** County policies, reflected in general and specific plan land-use designations, determine the total supply of sites available for new housing and their development potential; these policies often reflect environmental constraints and public objectives other than affordable housing, especially in rural areas, such as conservation of agricultural, open space and scenic resources. Potential opportunities for reducing the impact of county land-use and density policies on housing costs include:

Increasing the Total Supply of Housing Sites. Increased supply could lower land prices if total demand (including speculative demand) holds constant or diminishes - an assumption not supported by recent trends. Since the current inventory of available sites exceeds the need for new housing units by a substantial margin, there is no reason to believe that designation of more sites for housing would have the effect of lowering land prices. It appears that prices in the land market result from a more complex set of circumstances than are reflected in a simple quantitative comparison of demand and supply for residential land.

Development at Higher Densities. Table 4.3 shows that land costs per dwelling are lower at higher densities, while Table 3.2 shows that existing plans and zoning provide a multi-family development potential of only 2,888 units on vacant sites in unincorporated areas.

Second Unit Development. Construction of secondary (or "granny") units under the County's second unit ordinance can reduce land costs per unit if the purchase price of a parcel does not reflect second unit development potential, and if second unit rents do not reflect the owner's land cost or market rents for comparable housing constructed as primary units.

Subdivision Requirements. The County's subdivision ordinance implements the state's Subdivision Map Act and establishes standards and procedures for the subdivision of real property in unincorporated areas of the county. Subdivision requirements have a major impact on site improvement costs, which comprised 12.8-16.5 percent of housing production costs in 1984 (See Table 4.3). Although subdivision requirements and associated costs constrain the production of affordable housing, they are a principal means of implementing General Plan policies regarding the protection of public health and safety and assuring the availability of adequate public services and facilities.

The subdivision ordinance contains, or incorporates by reference, many development standards which relate the broad requirements of state law to local conditions. Among the standards incorporated by reference are those of the zoning ordinance, which are addressed separately. Non-zoning standards include those of the state departments of Health, Forestry and Transportation, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the County departments of Public Health and Public Works, the County Water Agency, and local fire districts. Any reductions in standards of local origin to promote the production of affordable housing must be consistent with the state Subdivision Map Act and with the requirements of non-county governmental agencies, must be reviewed for consistency with policies of other General Plan elements, and must be evaluated for impacts on long-term public costs related to health, safety, and future demand for services and facilities.



Since the Subdivision Ordinance is to be revised within the next year, the feasibility of reductions in development standards should be evaluated within the context of the overall revision process. Specific standards for which reductions might be considered include, for example, street and sidewalk requirements. Sonoma County's current standards for streets and sidewalks in urban residential areas require a 50 foot right of way width, including 36 feet of paved street, two 5 foot sidewalks, and two 2 foot unpaved strips behind sidewalks. Data from a recent survey by the American Planning Association indicates that some jurisdictions have adopted right-of-way widths as narrow as 40 feet (34 feet for townhouse development), and have waived sidewalk requirements or required sidewalks only on one side of a street. These reduced standards are typically applied in planned communities, where off-street visitor parking is required. The County's subdivision ordinance currently allows such reductions upon petition by the developer to the Planning Commission.

**Zoning Regulations.** The County's zoning ordinance contains use and density regulations reflective of General and Specific Plan land-use designations. It also contains standards regulating yard areas, building heights, site coverage, open space and parking, and establishes areas where mobile home units are prohibited. These standards limit the extent to which a residential site may be developed, but are a principal means of ensuring adequate sunlight, open space (for health, energy and fire safety purposes) and parking for residential units. Uniformity of standards within residential zoning districts preserves the architectural character of neighborhoods and stabilizes property values.

The impact of zoning standards on per unit production costs is difficult to assess, since they incorporate requirements of building, fire and housing codes which would remain in effect in the absence of zoning. However, reductions in zoning standards consistent with those codes may assist developers in achieving the maximum density permitted on a given site, reducing per unit land costs. Reductions in parking standards may also reduce direct costs slightly, while removal of mobile home restrictions would substantially reduce direct costs in affected areas.

The County's zoning ordinance was in the process of being revised as of 1984. As with the subdivision ordinance, the revision process should evaluate the feasibility of reducing zoning standards that add unnecessarily to production costs; requirements governing yard area, building height, site coverage and parking in particular should be reviewed. A comparison of detailed data from the recent American Planning Association survey with current county standards indicate the following:

- Given the flexibility permitted by the County's planned development regulations and the PC district, most existing yard requirements reflect minimum standards found among surveyed jurisdictions. However, several jurisdictions have adopted a rear yard requirement of 15 feet in R1 districts.

- Current County standards reflect prevailing requirements related to maximum lot coverage by structures.
- In general, current County parking space requirements are less than those of surveyed jurisdictions. However, several jurisdictions are now linking parking space requirements to number of bedrooms, eliminating the negative impact of per unit requirements on small units. Others have reduced minimum parking space dimensions. The maximum percentage of compact spaces permitted in multi-family developments ranged from 25 to 60 percent; the current County maximum is 20 percent.

**Construction Codes.** A variety of construction codes (including building, mechanical, electrical, fire and housing codes) have been prepared by professional associations and adopted (usually with minor modifications) by the County. In addition, certain provisions of state law establish minimum standards for residential construction. Code requirements have a substantial effect on unit construction costs, but ensure the health, safety, durability and structural soundness of residential units.

Reductions in those construction code standards which are not mandated by the state can reduce residential construction costs, but may increase long-term public and consumer costs if unit quality is substantially affected. In 1981, the County acted to reduce code requirements in rural areas through adoption of the "Class K" ordinance. This ordinance waives or modifies requirements for foundations, materials, mechanical and electrical equipment, and plumbing, provided the unit is owner-build and occupied, and located on a parcel of 20 or more acres. The reduced requirements undoubtedly may permit lower unit construction costs, but land costs resulting from the 20 acre minimum parcel size requirement mean that Class K housing is not affordable for most low- and moderate-income households.

Provisions of state law that affect housing production costs and which cannot be modified at the local level include two recent revisions of Title 24 of the Administrative Code:

- Revised energy conservation regulations establish conservation requirements for new residential structures (effective July, 1983).
- Revised accessibility regulations require that all ground-floor units in multi-family structures of 5 or more units be accessible to the physically handicapped (effective March, 1985).

The California Building Industry Association (CBIA) has estimated that revised energy conservation requirements will add \$1,500-2,000 to production costs per unit, while revised accessibility regulations will add \$500-600. Increased costs for energy conservation may increase initial sales prices and rents, but should reduce the utilities component of housing operating costs over the long term. Accessibility regulations will also increase initial sales prices and rents, but will address the housing needs of elderly and handicapped persons.

**Development Fees.** Table 4.7 shows that development fees can comprise as much as 92 percent of "indirect costs" and as much as 9.5 percent of total production costs for new residential units, and thus constitute a substantial constraint on the production of affordable housing. The development fee component of Table 4.3 includes two types of fees:

Service fees are charged for specific public services, such as water and sewer connections, in defined geographical areas; they help defray the capital costs involved in expanding facilities and services to accommodate demand generated by new housing units.

Permit fees are charged throughout the unincorporated county and do not vary by geographical area; they partially defray the costs of processing development permits required by the County.

Table 4.7 shows current fee ranges in urban unincorporated areas; it indicates that service fees have a far more substantial impact on production costs than permit fees, accounting for 83.9 - 93.4% of all development fees. Connection fees are charged by all urban water and sewer districts and impact fees by even school districts and by the County for road improvements in selected areas. The dollar amounts of sewer fees in 1984 ranged from \$600 per unit in the Geyserville C.S.D., to \$1,750 per unit in most other C.S.Ds., to a high of \$2,600 per unit in the Windsor Water District. Water connection fees in 1984 ranged from \$1,300 per unit in the Windsor Water District to \$1,900 per unit in the Southwest Santa Rosa (Roseland) area. School impact fees ranged from \$900 per unit in the Wright District to \$1,270 per unit in the Windsor Union District. Although detailed regional or statewide data are not available, these fee levels are comparable to those of districts in other urbanizing counties in California.

The need for service fees is the result of changes in local, state and federal funding mechanisms which have increased the dependence of local service districts on revenues from local sources for financing capital improvements. Current trends indicate that the degree of reliance on local revenue sources (including impact fees, assessment districts, property taxes, bond issues and service billings) is likely to continue at current levels or increase. With this background, local options for reducing impact fees to assist in the production of affordable housing are limited to measures that shift the costs of providing new services to persons other than occupants of new housing units, or to measures which directly or indirectly subsidize such fees. In the absence of such action, or the development of new state or federal funding programs, impact fees will continue to have a major effect on housing production costs throughout the 1984-1990 housing program period.

Permit fees are charged by the County Building, Planning, Public Health, and Public Works Departments. Table 4.7 shows that these fees comprise a small percentage of "indirect costs" and have relatively little impact on total production costs. This can be attributed to two factors:



TABLE 4.7: ILLUSTRATIVE PER UNIT DEVELOPMENT FEES FOR 20 UNIT SUBDIVISION, 1984

Type of Fee	Detached 1,200 Square Foot Single Family		Multi-unit 900 Square Foot Condominium	
	Fee	Percent of Sales Price	Fee	Percent of Sales Price
Impact Fees:				
Water	\$1,300 - 1,900	1.5 - 2.1	\$1,300 - 1,900	2.0 - 2.7
Sewer	1,750 - 2,600	2.1 - 2.9	1,750 - 2,600	2.7 - 3.7
Schools	0 - 1,270	0.0 - 1.4	0 - 1,270	0.0 - 1.8
Roads	0 - 500	0.0 - 0.5	0 - 500	0.0 - 0.7
Subtotal:	\$3,050 - 6,270	3.6 - 6.9	\$3,050 - 6,270	4.7 - 8.9
Permit Fees:				
Env. Review	\$ 5	Negligible	\$ 5	Negligible
Subdivision	30	Negligible	30	Negligible
Design Review	5	Negligible	5	Negligible
Plan Check	180	0.2	130	0.2
Building Permits	365	0.4	275	0.4
Subtotal:	\$ 585	0.6	\$ 445	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,635 - 6,855</b>	<b>4.2 - 7.5</b>	<b>\$3,495 - 6,715</b>	<b>5.3 - 9.5</b>

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department

- The County computes fees on a flat rate or per unit basis, and does not adjust fees to reflect staff time spent on more complex projects, as some other jurisdictions do.
- The rate of increase in permit fees has been less than that of many other jurisdictions. Since 1979, fees on a single family dwelling (per Table 4.3) have increased 30 percent from \$450 to \$585 per unit. This yields an effective rate of 5.4 percent annually, which was lower than the rate of inflation in consumer prices.

Increases in plan check and building permit fees accounted for 96 percent of the total increase in permit fees between 1979 and 1984; this is because the Building Department finances its entire budget from fee revenues. However, building fees are based on schedules provided in the Uniform Building code, and thus vary little from fees charged by other jurisdictions.

The fees shown in Table 4.7 assume that the 20-unit projects evaluated would not have significant adverse effects on the environment, and thus would not require the preparation of environmental documents. The \$100 fee shown for environmental review in Table 4.7 covers staff time required to prepare the Initial Study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its implementing guidelines, which verifies the absence of significant environmental impacts. For projects that may have significant adverse effects, either a full Environmental Impact Report or a focused environmental study is required. The County does not charge fees for these documents, which are prepared by the developer or by private consultants for review by County staff. The cost of environmental documents can vary considerably, but costs of recent EIRs for residential projects have ranged from \$5,000 to \$8,000, while costs of focused studies of one or two specific issues (ie. geology, traffic) have ranged from \$500 to \$2000. If environmental documents were required for the prototypical units in Table 4.7, they would add \$25-\$400 to "indirect costs" per unit.

Options for reducing permit fees to assist in the production of affordable housing include fee waivers, which could be authorized by the Board of Supervisors, and subsidies through various county, state or federal housing programs. However, current permit fees are such a minor component of total production costs that waivers or reductions will not have a substantial impact on the sales prices or rents of affordable units.

**Permit Processing Requirements.** Permit requirements and processing time are components of total housing production costs, since delays can increase financing costs. The extent to which longer processing time affects costs depends primarily on the way in which a developer has structured financing for site acquisition and construction.

Factors influencing permit processing time include:

- procedural requirements established by state law for environmental review, subdivision review and various planning actions or permits (eg. rezonings, use permits);

- procedural requirements established by the County, such as environmental and subdivision review by the Project Review and Advisory Committee (P.R.A.C) and design review by the Design Review Committee; and
- total number of staff members in relation to the total number of permit applications, as affected by the complexity of specific development proposals.

Given the procedural requirements of state law, opportunities for minimizing processing time to meet state-mandated time limits and reduce housing production costs are limited to requirements of local origin. One opportunity involves minimizing the number of residential projects for which environmental studies are required. In Sonoma County, this has been achieved through the preparation of EIRs on the specific plans which have been adopted for most unincorporated urban areas. By assessing the environmental effects of residential density policies, the county has limited the number of residential EIRs required since 1979 to nine, involving 728 units, all of which were subsequently approved for construction.

Other opportunities for reducing processing time include: 1) concurrent hearings on multiple-permit projects; 2) consolidation of the environmental and subdivision review functions of the Project Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC); and 3) expedited review of residential projects that provide low and moderate income housing.

#### 4.3 Affordable Housing in the Coastal Zone

State law (Government Code, Sections 65588 and 65590 et. seq.) requires the Housing Element to evaluate affordable housing opportunities in the Coastal Zone, and requires the County to encourage development of such housing. Potential constraints to meeting identified housing needs include:

- Land prices, which typically exceed \$50,000 per acre;
- Construction costs, which are higher than those in more central areas of the county, due to distance and access factors associated with the Sonoma Coast; and
- Urban water and sewer services, which are limited to the Bodega Bay P.U.D. and Sea Ranch CSA.

Survey data indicate that there are currently at least 2,197 vacant urban housing sites within urban service areas in the Coastal Zone, with a development potential of 2,517 units. Building activity since January 1980 has included 139 new single-family units and an additional 18 dwellings which were limited to occupancy by low- and moderate-income employees of a specific development complex in Bodega Bay. An additional 40 affordable units are to be provided at Sea Ranch, but have not yet been constructed.



Policies of the Coastal Specific Plan provide opportunities for increasing the supply of affordable housing by establishing two "housing opportunity areas" in the community of Bodega Bay, where density bonuses of up to 150 percent are permitted for residential projects in exchange for provision of affordable units equal to one-fourth of total units. The plan also permits second-unit development in specified areas, and establishes the following residential permit requirements:

- In projects of 11 or more units, 15 percent (not less than one unit) must be affordable units and are subject to limits on future resale prices and rents.
- In projects of 5-10 units, developers must either: (a) provide affordable units equal to 15 percent of the project total, or (b) pay a fee equal to six percent of the market price of the project to a coastal zone site acquisition and development fund.
- Conversions of low- and moderate-income rental units to condominiums are prohibited, unless the conversion provides a greater affordable housing opportunity.
- Demolition of low- and moderate-income housing is prohibited, unless demolished units are replaced with units of comparable rental value.

The latter two requirements are similar to those of state legislation enacted in 1982, except that state law exempts specified types of projects, unless the local government "determines that replacement is feasible, in which event replacement dwelling units shall be required." Although the County has issued no permits for residential conversions or demolitions since adoption of the Coastal Specific Plan in 1980, criteria for determining the feasibility of replacement should be developed.

#### **4.4 Housing Costs and Affordable Housing: Objectives and Policies**

##### **4.4.1 Production of New Affordable Housing.**

Data from Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate the following:

- construction of 3,380 affordable units would be necessary to meet the needs of new low- and moderate-income households over the 1984-90 period; and
- there were 9,646 low- and moderate-income households paying an excessive share (30 percent or more) of income for housing in 1980.

Assuming that 1980 data is representative of current conditions, the total number of households with needs for affordable housing to be addressed during the 1984-90 period is 13,026. This total need far exceeds available resources. The maximum number of new affordable units whose availability can be reasonably assured include:

- the estimated number of additional rental units that will be eligible for Section 8 rent subsidies (235 units); and
- the estimated number of new affordable units that can be constructed with direct or indirect financial assistance from local, state or federal housing programs (300 ownership units and 915 rental units).

Provision of a sufficient number of affordable units to address the remaining need is dependent on the housing market, which can be assisted by the County through production incentives (eg. density bonuses) and specific measures that reduce production costs. If total assisted production of units is deducted from 1984-90 new housing production needs, the target for market production of units at affordable prices and rents would be 1,930 units.

**Objective 4A: Market Production of Housing Affordable to Low and Moderate Income Households**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 4-7**

It is the County's objective to encourage the housing market to construct at least 1,200 new dwelling units during the 1984-1990 period with occupancy costs that are not excessive for households with low or moderate income.

**Policy 4A1: Density Bonuses**  
**Program Reference(s): 7 and 8**

It is the policy of Sonoma County to authorize an increase in maximum allowable density of 25 percent over the number of units that would otherwise be authorized on a site where the developer agrees to:

- (a) Set aside 25 percent or more of the total units for occupancy by low- and moderate-income households at prices and rents which are affordable; or
- (b) Set aside 50 percent or more of the total units for occupancy by persons 55 year of age or older, in accordance with the provisions SB 1553 (Chapter 133, Statutes of 1984).

Where a developer agrees to market 10 percent or more of the total units to households with very low- or lower-incomes, the County shall authorize a density bonus of 30 percent over the number of units otherwise authorized by the General Plan or any applicable specific plan. It is the County's policy to emphasize utilization of density bonuses, rather than to provide other incentives of equivalent financial value as specified in Government Code Section 65915. Additionally, it is the County's policy that density bonuses be limited to those unincorporated urban areas where water, sewer and other urban services and infrastructure are adequate.

**Policy 4A2: Development Ordinances, Regulations and Procedures**  
**Program Reference(s): 7-9 and 32**

It is the County's policy that any future revisions to its zoning and subdivision ordinances and building regulations (including all construction codes) be evaluated with respect to their potential impacts on housing costs; it is the County's policy that revised ordinances, regulations and procedures not add unnecessarily to housing production costs.

**Policy 4A3: Cost-saving Design and Construction Techniques**  
**Program Reference(s): 8 and 9**

It is Sonoma County's policy to encourage the use of cost-saving design and construction techniques -- such as clustering, zero-lot line development, manufactured housing, owner-built housing and Class K housing -- by maintaining and revising ordinances and regulations to accommodate these techniques effectively.

**Policy 4A4: Priorities in the Review of New Residential Development**  
**Program Reference(s): Implementation through existing review procedures.**

When considering development applications for new residential development, it is the County's policy to balance the need for amenities or design features against the needs for affordable housing and for housing compatible with surrounding development. The need for affordable housing shall have priority over any amenities which are not required to ensure health and safety, mitigate environmental impacts, or ensure compatibility with surrounding development. The cost of amenities or design features required should be the minimum necessary to achieve their purpose.

**Policy 4A5: Impact and Processing Fees**  
**Program Reference(s): 8 and 9**

It is the County's policy that any development fees for residential projects be directly related to the costs of providing public facilities and improvements to services that are necessary to accommodate the project -- and to maintain the public health, safety and welfare.

**Policy 4A6: Plan Processing Procedures**  
**Program Reference(s): 8 and 9**

It is the County's policy to "streamline" its permit processing procedures by allowing concurrent public hearings on those residential development projects which require multiple permits and by allowing concurrent consideration of environmental documentation under CEQA.



**Policy 4A7: Replacement Housing for Low- and Moderate-Income Households in the Coastal Zone**  
**Program Reference(s): 12**

It is the County's policy to require construction of new units to replace any low- and moderate-income housing in the Coastal Zone that is demolished or converted to condominium ownership. Replacement units shall be set aside for occupancy by low- and moderate-income households and prices and rents shall be established at levels which are affordable to those households.

**Objective 4B: Production of New Assisted Housing Affordable to Low- and Moderate-Income Households**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 5, 6 and 7**

It is the County's objective to assist in the provision of 1,010 housing units which shall be limited to occupancy by qualified low- and moderate-income households; the prices or rents for these units shall be set at levels which are affordable to households with low or moderate incomes.

**Policy 4B1: Administration of Assisted Housing Programs**  
**Program Reference(s): 10 and 24**

It is the County's policy that its various housing assistance programs be administered by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission.

**Policy 4B2: Allocation of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)**  
**Program Reference(s): 10**

It is the County's policy to continue to allocate a significant proportion of its annual community development block grant funds to programs which address the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households.

**Policy 4B3: Surplus Land**  
**Program Reference(s): 3**

It is the County's policy that development of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households is a high priority for re-use of government-owned lands declared surplus, provided such lands are environmentally suitable and have access to necessary public services, and that any proposed development is consistent with general plan land-use policies.

**Policy 4B4: Financial Assistance for Housing Production**  
**Program Reference(s): 6, 13-17, 20-21 and 29**

It is the County's policy to make the fullest possible use of federal, state and local resources to assist the production of housing units for occupancy by households with low or moderate incomes. Additionally, it is the County's policy to continue to utilize mortgage revenue bonds or other mortgage-backed securities to the extent possible to obtain revenues to assist in production of low- and moderate-income housing. Such assistance may be provided to housing developers and/or to qualified homebuyers. Priority shall be given to non-profit housing developers.

**Policy 4B5: Location of Assisted Units**  
**Program Reference(s): 10**

It is the County's policy to ensure that housing assisted directly or indirectly by public funds be constructed in a variety of urban locations throughout the unincorporated county, with no undue concentration in any limited geographic area.

**4.4.2 Production and Conservation of Affordable Rental Housing**

Building activity records for the 1980-84 period indicate that multi-family housing has accounted for only 14 percent of new housing production, while data from Table 4.3 indicate that the market under conditions prevailing in 1984 is unlikely to produce new rental units which are affordable to very low-income households. Since the majority of low- and moderate-income housing consumers are limited by their resources to the rental market, it is important that County policies encourage both the production of new rental units and the conservation of existing affordable rental units. In some instances, it may be necessary or desirable that financial assistance be provided directly to renter households to reduce their expenditures for housing.

Some California communities have enacted rent control ordinances which limit the rate and amount of rent increases, in some instances through initiatives approved by voters. Although rent control may reduce housing expenditures of those households occupying controlled units, the general conclusion is that such controls may reduce the level of investment in new rental housing, both by limiting its profitability compared to other investments and by creating an investment climate characterized by uncertainty. Since production of new rental housing is as important as reasonable rents for existing units, the policy approach called for includes elements that discourage rent increases not related to the costs of owning and maintaining rental property, while ensuring an investment climate that encourages production of new rental units.

**Objective 4C: Affordable Rental Housing**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 5, 6 and 7**

It is the County's objective to maintain or reduce the 1980 proportion of low- and moderate-income renter households paying more than 30 percent of income for housing (49 percent).

**Policy 4C1: Financial Assistance for Production of Affordable New Rental Housing**  
**Program Reference(s): 6, 13-15, 17, 20-21 and 29**

It is the County's policy that production of affordable rental housing shall have the highest priority in the utilization of revenues from the sale of mortgage-backed revenue bonds. Since such housing will of necessity be at higher densities, it is the County's policy that assisted rental housing be located within the unincorporated urban service areas. Where feasible or practical, it shall be the County's policy to utilize other incentives in combination with interest-rate reductions for this purpose; these incentives may include "write-downs" of land costs and fee reductions. The County shall encourage and give priority to projects sponsored by non-profit organizations.

**Policy 4C2: Housing Opportunity Areas**  
**Program Reference(s): 1-4 and 8**

It is the County's policy that updates of the land-use elements of the general plan and applicable specific plans identify particular sites and locations within urban service areas which are appropriate and suitable for construction of new moderate- and high-density rental housing. Additionally, once such areas are identified, it shall be the County's policy to develop incentives and programs which are "targeted" to development of multi-unit rental housing affordable to very low- and lower-income households in those areas.

**Policy 4C3: Rent Increases and Regulation**  
**Program Reference(s): 11**

It is the County's policy not to establish rent controls for new or existing units; however, the County shall attempt to discourage increases in residential rents that are not reasonably related to the costs of owning and maintaining rental property, including a reasonable return on rental property investments, by establishing a mechanism for the provision of voluntary rent mediation services in situations where there are rent disputes.

**Policy 4C4: Financial Assistance to Low- and Moderate-Income Renter Households**  
**Program Reference(s): 18-19 and 21-22**

It is the County's policy to make to the fullest possible use of state and federal programs which provide a portion of the rent payments on behalf of low- and moderate-income households; priority shall be given to households with very low- and lower-incomes. These programs shall continue to be administered by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission.



## **5.0 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING SERVICES: MEETING SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS OF POPULATION SUB-GROUPS**

Some population sub-groups, such as the elderly, the disabled, households with female heads and farmworker households, have particular housing needs that may not be fully addressed by the market. California law (Government Code, Section 65583) requires an analysis of the special needs of these sub-groups, to ensure an adequate distribution of housing services.

### **5.1 Population Sub-Groups With Special Housing Needs**

#### **5.1.1. The Elderly Population**

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of the population over age 55 in 1980 by unincorporated planning area; persons in the 55-64 age cohort are included because they will reach age 65 during the 1984-90 housing program period. The table shows that 63.7 percent of the over-55 population and 65 percent of the over-65 population of the unincorporated county live in three planning areas: Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Sebastopol. Unincorporated areas whose total population includes high proportions of persons over 65 are the Sonoma (16.1 percent), Santa Rosa and Russian River (13.2 percent each) areas. Unincorporated areas with high proportions of persons aged 55-64 include the Sonoma Coast (12.9 percent), Cloverdale (12.0 percent), Sonoma Valley and Healdsburg (11.0 percent each) areas.

The proportion of total county population over age 65 increased from 12.9 percent in 1970 to 13.5 percent in 1980; the proportion of residents over 55 also increased during that decade. Given the age distribution of the 1980 population and the attractiveness of the county as a retirement site, it is likely that persons over 65 will comprise even higher proportions of the 1990 population in the unincorporated parts of all planning areas except Petaluma, Rohnert Park-Cotati and Healdsburg.

#### **5.1.2 Minority Populations**

Although differences in definitions and procedures by the U.S. Bureau of the Census make comparisons between 1970 and 1980 difficult, it appears that racial and ethnic minorities' share of county population increased during the decade, although not dramatically. The largest increases were for Asian and Pacific Islanders and the category of "other". With the exception of the Hispanic population group, the size of all ethnic/racial groups grew more rapidly than did the total population. All racial minorities combined constituted only 7.2 percent of the county's residents in 1980, while the Hispanic category -- which is not a racial classification -- comprised 6.9 percent. In comparison to other counties in California, Sonoma County's population remains relatively homogeneous in its racial and ethnic composition. In recent years, the most severe housing problems have been experienced by recent immigrants and refugees, especially those with origins in Latin America and Southeast Asia.

TABLE 5.1: POPULATION OVER AGE 55 BY PLANNING AREA, 1980

<u>Unincorporated Planning Area</u>	<u>Age 55-64</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>Age 65+</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>Population Age 55+</u>
Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin	699	(5.2)	660	(3.8)	1,359	(4.5)	25.1
Cloverdale/N.E. County	597	(4.4)	626	(3.7)	1,223	(4.0)	24.5
Healdsburg and Environs	1,359	(10.0)	1,568	(9.3)	2,927	(9.6)	23.8
Russian River	1,088	(8.0)	1,722	(10.2)	2,810	(9.2)	21.6
Santa Rosa and Environs	4,120	(30.4)	5,239	(31.0)	9,359	(30.7)	23.6
Sebastopol and Environs	1,727	(12.7)	1,964	(11.6)	3,691	(12.1)	20.5
Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs	469	(3.5)	510	(3.0)	979	(3.2)	17.2
Petaluma and Environs	910	(6.7)	852	(5.0)	1,762	(5.8)	16.5
Sonoma Valley	2,583	(19.1)	3,783	(22.4)	6,366	(20.9)	26.1
<b>Total Unincorporated</b>	<b>13,552</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>	<b>16,924</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>	<b>30,476</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>	<b>22.9</b>
<b>All Cities</b>	<b>15,225</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>23,425</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>38,650</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>23.3</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>28,777</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>40,349</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>69,126</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>23.1</b>

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, from STF 1A, Bureau of the Census

### **5.1.3 Farmworkers**

Reliable data on the size of the farmworker population and its housing needs are difficult to obtain, due to the seasonal and migratory nature of farm work and the participation of undocumented workers in the agricultural labor force. However, the California Human Development Commission (CHDC) estimated that in 1984 there were 4,200 documented, year-round farmworker households in Sonoma County, containing about 21,000 persons, living in about 3,000 farmworker housing units.

### **5.1.4 Single-parent Households With Children**

Data from 1980 indicated that over 14,700 family households residing in Sonoma County were comprised of single-parent families with children; approximately 37 percent of these families (5,512) occupied housing units located in the unincorporated area. A large majority of these households, more than three-fourths, were families with a female as the head-of-household. More than 3,800 female-headed households residing in unincorporated areas included children under age 17; about one-fourth of these households had incomes below the census-defined poverty level, compared to just eleven percent of all families with children under age 17. Obtaining adequate income and housing are especially difficult for female-headed households with small children. In 1980, nearly 700 such households with children age five or less resided in unincorporated areas and more than one-half of these households had incomes below the poverty level.

### **5.1.5 The Handicapped Population**

According to 1981 data from the California Department of Rehabilitation, 23,630 county residents (about 7.7 percent of total population) had some form of physical or mental disability. Data from the 1980 census indicated that there were over 700 residents in the unincorporated county (5.1 percent of total population) with chronic disabilities that limited the type or amount of work they could perform, of which one-half were prevented from working by their disability.

### **5.1.6 Large Families**

For purposes of the housing element, large families are defined as households composed of five or more related persons. Unfortunately, the Census provides no specific data on family size, but does report on household size. Therefore this plan uses household size data as an indicator of family size, although some large households may consist of unrelated individuals living together voluntarily. Data from the 1980 Census indicated that there were 5,360 households composed of five or more persons residing in unincorporated areas of the county. Of these, 3,440 (6.9 percent of all households) are five-person households, and 1,920 (3.9 percent of all households) are composed of six or more persons.



### 5.1.7 The Homeless Population and Other Persons with Emergency Shelter Needs

The housing needs of homeless persons are more difficult to measure and assess than those of any other population sub-group. Since these individuals have no permanent address they are not likely to be counted in the Census, and since they are unlikely to have stable employment the market provides few housing opportunities. Available data on the homeless population is limited to an August 1983 report by the Emergency Shelter Task Force of the Sonoma County Council for Community Services. This report compiled data on requests for emergency shelter received by local social service agencies during January 1983. The report indicates that 29 of 32 agencies surveyed received requests for emergency shelter during the survey month. The frequency of requests was as follows:

"Several" to 12 per day	-	4 agencies
"Several times a week"	-	9 agencies
"Several times a month"	-	5 agencies
"Once in a great while"	-	11 agencies

The total number of persons requesting assistance during the survey month was 534, or an average of about 17 per day. Table 5.2 indicates that persons with the most serious unmet needs were transients, the mentally ill, single women, single men and the handicapped.

TABLE 5.2: Persons Requesting Emergency Shelter, January 1983

<u>Persons with Unmet Housing Needs</u>	<u>Percent of Agencies Reporting Need</u>
Single Men	42.9
Single Women	46.4
Single Women (pregnant)	17.8
All Families:	25.0
Families	32.1
Single parents with children	21.4
Families with Teenagers	21.4
Large Families	25.0
Families without children	25.0
Teenagers	25.0
Elderly	21.4
Students	21.4
Handicapped	42.9
Mentally Ill	46.4
Alcoholics	25.0
Ex-Offenders	21.4
Transients	60.7

Source: Sonoma County Council for Community Services, August 1983.

## **5.2 Meeting Special Housing Needs: Constraints and Opportunities**

Special housing needs of the population sub-groups cited in the previous section include: affordable housing, accessible housing, protection from housing discrimination, large-family housing, sound housing for farmworkers and emergency or temporary shelter for homeless persons.

### **5.2.1 Affordability of Housing**

Constraints and opportunities related to increasing the supply of affordable housing are discussed in detail in Section 4.2. All groups with special needs have problems of housing affordability, often due to limited ability to participate in education or training programs that would increase income and housing opportunities or to participate in the labor market because of advanced age, disabilities, the necessity of providing care for small children, or other factors. Income characteristics of each group are summarized as follows:

**Elderly.** Data from the 1980 Census indicate that 2,693 elderly households, or about one out of every ten elderly households, had annual incomes in 1979 which were below the federal poverty levels for elderly households. Although specific data on elderly households paying more than 30 percent of income for housing are unavailable, the maximum monthly SSI benefit for a two-person household was \$436 in 1984, while the maximum monthly Social Security benefit for a retired couple (assuming one wage earner) was \$1,055. These data indicate that elderly households that do not own their own homes or do not have savings or retirement benefits from private sources are likely to pay more than 30 percent of income for housing. Households owning their homes or receiving other income may still have affordability problems if other expenses, such as medical care, consume a high proportion of total income.

**Racial and Ethnic Minorities.** Data from the 1980 Census indicate that minority households in unincorporated areas were two to eight times more likely to have incomes in 1979 which were below the federal poverty level (\$7,412 for a family of four) than were white households. The minority groups most seriously affected by very low incomes were blacks, with just over one-fourth of these households below the poverty level, and Native Americans, with more than eight of every ten households below the poverty level. In comparison, about 12 percent of all white households had incomes below the poverty level, while just over 18 percent of Asian and Hispanics experienced income deprivation.

**Farmworkers and Farmworker Households.** Since the average income of farmworker households was estimated at \$5-10,000 per year in 1984, affordable rental housing is a primary need. The housing problem of these households is compounded by the seasonal and migratory nature of farm work, which means that many farmworker households pay high rents for short-term tenancies.

**Female-Headed Households with Children.** Since women (particularly those with children) may enter the housing market suddenly -- without recent work experience -- due to death or divorce, affordable rental housing is a primary need. In a worst-case situation, a woman with two children eligible for federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) would receive about \$555 per month in 1984, of which \$180 was targeted for housing. Such a family might also be eligible for food stamps (assuming they had no assets, such as a car, valued over \$1,500), but benefits would average only about \$125 month. Rent survey data indicate there are few one bedroom or larger units available in this rent range.

**Affordable Housing Opportunities.** Several existing housing programs provide assistance to groups with special needs:

**Elderly and Handicapped.** Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds and tax increment revenues from redevelopment project areas can be used to construct, or assist the construction of housing projects for the elderly or handicapped. In addition, the federal Section 202 (of the Housing and Community Development Act) program provides up to 100 percent financing to non-profit sponsors of housing for lower income elderly and handicapped households.

**Farmworkers.** Farmworker housing may also be assisted by Community Development Block Grants and/or tax increment revenues. In addition, the state HCD's Farmworker Grant program provides funds for land purchase and site improvements for farmworker housing, but does not finance actual construction. At the federal level, the Farmers Home Administration provides construction and purchase financing for very low and lower income housing, including single-and multi-family units, subject to a \$60,000 cap on unit sales prices. These loans are only available in designated rural areas; unincorporated areas in Sonoma County that qualify for the rural designation include Windsor, Geyserville, the Russian River and Coastal areas and Sonoma Valley.

**Other Special Needs Groups.** An additional opportunity to provide affordable housing results from the under utilization of existing units. Census data indicates that 96.7 percent of occupied units countywide had less than 1.00 persons per room, with the corresponding 1980 proportion for unincorporated areas 95.1 percent. A large proportion of these units may be occupied at rates less than .50 persons per room, reflecting trends towards smaller household sizes, and the increasing numbers of married couples whose children have left home. These units present opportunities for shared housing, which allows compatible, unrelated families and individuals to cut housing costs, and can also provide companionship and assist with child care. The Sonoma County Community Development Commission maintains a shared-housing information board, facilitating contacts between interested persons.



### 5.2.2 Assessible Housing and Congregate Housing

Data from the 1980 Census indicate that 12.9 percent of all persons aged 65 or older, and 0.7 percent of all persons aged 16-64 had disabilities that limited their use of public transportation. It is reasonable to assume that most of these persons are unable to occupy two-story units, or upper-floor units in multi-family structures without elevators, and may require special facilities (eg. ramps, railings) to occupy ground-floor units. A recently enacted state law, effective July 1, 1984, requires all ground floor apartment units in projects of five or more units to be accessible to the handicapped. The law requires accessible design of walks, ramps and doors, and requires that interior fixtures be readily adaptable for use by the handicapped, subject to a provision that limits the overall cost of these requirements to \$600 per unit.

The increasing population of individuals of advanced age indicates a need for housing which is designed to serve the physical and social requirements of these persons. Often termed "congregate housing," this type of shelter frequently consists of small individual units without kitchens (or with minimal provisions for cooking) with some common facilities and services, including shared arrangements for meals and housekeeping services. The marketplace appears to be responding to the demand for this type of shelter, although the costs of these housing facilities may be beyond the financial means of a large share of the elderly population.

### 5.2.3 Protection from Housing Discrimination

Laws at the federal, state and local levels prohibit housing discrimination against various population sub-groups. State laws prohibit discrimination on the bases of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, age (40+), marital status or physical handicaps; they also prohibit discrimination against cancer patients and retaliatory actions by landlords. Although state law also prohibits discrimination against families with children (except in mobile home parks and housing projects for the elderly, authority to enforce this law has not yet been delegated to any state agency; all other discrimination complaints are under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco office of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH).

At the local level, an adopted goal of the general plan calls for the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity and age, while all assisted housing projects in which the County participates are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex and marital status. Assisted projects are also subject to the anti-discrimination requirements of any state or federal program involved in project funding. The County also participates in the funding of SCRIMS, which provides voluntary mediation services for any alleged violation of state anti-discrimination laws, and provides forms and assistance in filing complaints with the state DFEH. During fiscal year 1983-84, SCRIMS received 9 complaints of racial/ethnic discrimination and 29 complaints of discrimination against children, while DFEH accepted two complaints of discrimination for filing.

The principal opportunity for improving the county's current anti-discrimination policies involves amending existing policy language so as to include all forms of housing discrimination prohibited by state law, while continuing to support information, mediation and referral services provided by SCRIMS.

#### **5.2.4 Large-Family Housing**

Data from the 1980 Census indicated that there were 5,168 housing units located in unincorporated areas which had four or more bedrooms. Although the supply of large units is sufficient to house more than 95 percent of households with five or more persons, this does not mean that all large families (or households) live in units of adequate size. The Census indicated that there were 1,308 housing units with 1.01 or more persons per room in the unincorporated county, and 3,832 such units countywide. On a countywide basis, 9.2 percent of all overcrowded units were occupied by racial minority households, while one-fourth of all overcrowded units were occupied by Spanish-origin households.

The availability of large units can be affected by overall housing prices and rents, which sometimes encourage occupancy of such units by unrelated individuals and deprive large families of housing opportunities. Long-term household size trends mean that many large units may be older units which bring premium prices or rents, or they may be vulnerable to demolition or conversion to multi-family occupancy. The prospect of continued declines in average household size means that the market has little incentive to provide new large units; the costs of constructing such units mean that, even if provided, these dwellings may not be affordable to large families.

Although the proportion of overcrowded units countywide declined from 6.7 percent in 1970 to 2.8 percent of all units in 1980, the continued availability of units with four or more bedrooms is important to large families and households. In 1984, there were no County policies which constrained or encouraged the construction, conversion or demolition of large units.

#### **5.2.5 Sound Farmworker Housing**

The Codes and Standards Division of the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) enforces the standards of the Employee Housing Act for housing occupied by five or more employees of the same employer. In 1984, there were 34 farm labor camps in the county, housing 516 agricultural employees. The state inspects this housing upon initial certification and through annual unannounced inspections.

Farmworker housing not under the jurisdiction of the state is subject to construction, housing and health codes enforced by the county's Building and Public Health departments. Since most farmworkers live in housing that is not under state jurisdiction, enforcement of these codes is the principal means of ensuring sound farmworker housing. However, unlike the mandatory inspection requirements of state law, local codes require enforcement agencies to have

"reasonable cause" to believe a code violation exists before entering a dwelling for inspection purposes. This has been interpreted as requiring a request (or complaint) by the owner or occupant of a unit, unless the violation is clearly visible. In the case of visible violations, inspections without owner or occupant consent can be made by obtaining an "inspection warrant" through the courts. For violations involving interior features or fixtures, a request (or complaint) by the owner or occupant is required. Since many code violations involve interior conditions, and since many farmworkers are reluctant to file formal complaints against property owners (who may also be their employers), many violations may go unreported. If such violations are reported by a third party, enforcement agencies may be unable to act.

### **5.2.6 Emergency Shelter**

Several community service agencies, some with partial funding from government sources, provide temporary housing for homeless persons. However, the total number of beds available at all such facilities was about 88 (excluding floorspace) in 1984. Available housing is clearly inadequate to meet the needs identified by the Emergency Shelter Task Force. On the other hand, there is no reporting mechanism to verify the scale of need that currently exists.

Opportunities for meeting the housing needs of homeless persons appear limited to measures requiring direct financial or material support by local social service agencies and/or county government. The Emergency Shelter Task Force report recommends:

- the rental of housing units in which families can be given shelter for a maximum of seven nights;
- the acquisition of a large building to provide additional emergency shelter for families;
- the acquisition of property suitable for development with manufactured housing, also for the purpose of providing emergency shelter for families;
- development of a facility similar in style to the Rescue Mission, for homeless, mentally ill persons; and
- acquisition of a large house, where rooms could be rented by the week to homeless persons receiving General Assistance or SSI benefits.

### **5.3 Distribution of Housing Services: County Objectives and Policies**

County objectives and policies regarding expansion of the supply of affordable housing for all low- and moderate-income households, including those with special housing needs, are presented in Section 4.4.



### **5.3.1 Housing for the Elderly**

The housing needs of the elderly population, while including affordable and accessible housing, also include access to medical care, transportation and social activities. Many elderly persons find that housing specifically designed for their needs, such as "life care" or congregate housing facilities, provide a package of services that meets all these needs. The following objective is based on the number of housing units that are likely to be funded under the HUD Section 202 program in the unincorporated county over the 1984-90 period, as estimated by Community Development Commission staff.

#### **Objective 5A: Production of Housing for the Elderly**

**Addresses Goal(s): 5-8**

It is the County's objective to encourage the construction of 45 assisted housing units reserved for occupancy by low- and moderate-income elderly households during the period 1984 to 1990.

#### **Policy 5A1: Financial Assistance for Production of Elderly Housing**

**Program Reference(s): 6, 13, 14, 17, 20 and 21**

It shall be the policy of Sonoma County to utilize to the extent possible available state and federal programs which provide financial assistance to reduce the costs of developing housing for the elderly; such financial assistance may include below market interest rate loans, greater loan-to-value ratios, or other types of assistance.

#### **Objective 5B: Innovative Design of Housing for the Elderly**

**Addresses Goal(s): 4 and 7**

It is the County's objective to encourage production of housing projects which have design features that are tailored specifically to the needs of persons of advanced age; these design approaches include "life care" and "congregate housing" and may include approaches that accommodate a mixture of age and income groups and of handicapped and non-handicapped persons. Additionally, it is the County's objective that all such housing facilities be located within urban service areas, and that sites be located where there is easy access to transportation, medical, retail, and other services required by the elderly.

#### **Policy 5B1: Plan and Zoning Ordinance Revisions**

**Program Reference(s) 1, 2 and 8**

It shall be the policy of Sonoma County in reviewing and updating the general and specific plan land-use elements and the County's zoning ordinance to assure that revisions and amendments accommodate development of congregate housing as a use allowed subject to approval of a use permit in specific zoning districts. Revised policies and regulations may include waiver of maximum density restrictions, modification of parking requirements, and other changes which reflect the unique character of this housing type.

**5.3.2 Accessible Housing**

Accessible housing needs of the elderly and handicapped are addressed by recent state legislation, which should be vigorously enforced by the County. The following objective represents a conservative estimate of the number of units subject to state accessibility regulations over the 1984-90 period.

**Objective 5C: Production of Accessible Housing**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 7**

It is the County's objective to encourage construction of accessible housing units equal to 10 percent of total 1984-90 unit needs (550 units).

**Policy 5C1: Residential Development Permit Review Procedures**  
**Program Reference(s): Implementation through existing review procedures.**

It shall be the policy of Sonoma County to review residential development proposals to enforce accessible housing requirements of state law, and to encourage maximum use of accessible design in projects not subject to state requirements.

**5.3.3 Protection from Housing discrimination**

It is the intent of the housing element to adopt anti-discrimination policies which are in conformity with current state and federal law.

**Objective 5D: Elimination of Housing Discrimination**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 7**

It is Sonoma County's objective to discourage any discrimination in the housing market and in assisted housing programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age (except in elderly housing and mobile home parks), disease or handicaps.

**Policy 5D1: Mediation of Housing Discrimination Complaints**  
**Program Reference(s): 11 and 26**

It shall be Sonoma County's policy to continue to support the efforts of SCRIMS, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and professional associations to enforce anti-discrimination laws through mediation of disputes and provision of assistance in filing discrimination complaints.

**5.3.4 Large-Family Housing**

The housing needs of large families with low- or moderate-incomes are not likely to be addressed by the housing market. Thus it is important to conserve the existing stock of units with four or more bedrooms.

**Objective 5E: Conservation of Large-family Housing**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 7 and 14**

It is the County's objective to minimize demolitions or conversions to multi-family occupancy of housing units with four or more bedrooms.

**Policy 5E1: Deomolition or Conversion of Large-family Housing**  
**Program Reference(s): Implementation through existing review procedures.**

It shall be the County's policy to discourage the demolition or conversion to multi-family occupancy of units having four or more bedrooms, unless:

- (A) the unit is found to be substandard and not suitable for rehabilitation upon inspection by the County Building Department; or
- (B) conversion of the unit to multi-family occupancy is intended to meet the housing needs of special needs groups, as determined by the Planning Director.

**Policy 5E2: Financial Assistance to Large-Families with Low- or Moderate-Income**  
**Program Reference(s): 13-20**

It shall be the policy of Sonoma County to place priority on assistance to large families in utilizing federal programs which provide financial assistance to households for the purpose of paying a portion of housing expenditures.

**5.3.5 Farmworker Housing**

In 1984 the County in 1984 was co-sponsoring a study of farmworker housing needs with the City of Healdsburg. This study, when completed, may serve as a model for similar efforts in other areas of the County. At the same time, the inspection and correction of alleged substandard farmworker housing and abatement of any violations is a priority.

**Objective 5F: Elimination of Substandard Farmworker Housing**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 7**

It is the County's objective that all cases of substandard farmworker housing under County jurisdiction be promptly investigated. As resources permit, enforcement proceedings should attempt to abate unsafe conditions and to bring lawfully-constructed units up to code standards so that they remain available for occupancy.

**Policy 5F1: Production of New Farmworker Housing**  
**Program Reference(s): 1, 2, 6, 10, 15, 16, 20 and 25**

It is the County's policy to encourage construction of new housing designed for occupancy by farmworkers; the highest priority is for year-round family housing and the second priority is housing for transient single persons. Any multi-unit housing which is intended for year-round occupancy by farmworkers



and their families shall be restricted to locations which are served by public water and sewerage systems; housing intended for transient occupancy by migrant farmworkers may be permitted in rural locations which are accessible to agricultural lands. Where feasible, the County shall provide assistance to other public agencies, non-profit organizations and farmer/farmworker organizations in providing new farmworker housing.

**Policy 5F2: Farmworker Housing Code Enforcement Activities**

**Program Reference(s): 23**

It is the County's policy that farmworker housing code enforcement activities shall be intended to abate unsafe conditions and to expedite, where practicable, the rehabilitation and continued availability of lawfully-constructed farmworker housing units.

**Policy 5F3: Farmworker Housing Under State Jurisdiction**

**Program Reference(s): 23, 25 and 28**

It shall be the County's policy to encourage the Codes and Standards Division of the State Department of Housing and community development to vigorously enforce state standards for employee-occupied housing within Sonoma County.

**5.3.6 Emergency Shelter**

The homeless population has the most pressing housing problems of any group with special needs. These needs may exist on a long-term basis for some individuals, while for others the need may occur suddenly (as, for example, upon divorce or abandonment) and extend for only a short period of time.

**Objective 5G: Increasing the Capacity of Emergency Shelter Facilities**

**Addresses Goal(s): 7**

It is the County's objective to increase the number of beds available in emergency housing facilities by at least 100 percent (from 88 to at least 176 beds) during the 1984 to 1990 period.

**Policy 5G1: Financial Assistance for Development of Emergency Shelter Facilities**

**Program Reference(s): 10 and 27**

It is the County's policy to provide financial assistance to agencies which provide emergency housing for the purpose of expanding the number of units or beds secured to accommodate this need; such assistance may be provided from general fund sources or from local, state or federal program sources. Assistance may be provided to secure transitional housing as well as overnight shelter for both individuals and families.

## **6.0 HOUSING QUALITY: ASSURING THAT HOUSING IS PROVIDED AND MAINTAINED IN ACCEPTABLE AND SERVICEABLE CONDITION**

Although only a small share of Sonoma County's existing housing stock is so seriously deteriorated as to constitute a health and safety hazard, households occupying these units suffer an extreme housing deprivation. Furthermore, the County's concern extends to units with less-severe deficiencies, since the useful economic life of these dwellings will be shortened unless improvements are made to prevent their continued deterioration and possible abandonment. Within the unincorporated urban service areas, these deteriorating units are most often concentrated in limited areas of several adjacent blocks, while substandard rural housing is dispersed more evenly throughout the countryside. The major exception to this generalization occurs in various locations along the Russian River, where a number of older units originally constructed for seasonal use have deteriorated in quality. Issues related to housing quality extend to new construction, since standards for new dwellings affect both their costs to consumers and their durability.

### **6.1 Assessment of Housing Quality Needs**

#### **6.1.1 Quality of New Residential Construction**

**Siting and Structural Requirements.** Quality standards for new residential construction are established by construction codes and subdivision requirements intended to provide structurally sound units on sites free of geological, flooding or other safety hazards. The cost implications of these requirements were assessed in subsection 4.2.3.

**Energy Conservation.** The State of California's Title 24 energy conservation requirements (effective July 1983) establish "energy budgets," or maximum energy use levels, for new residential units in sixteen different climate zones throughout the state. The requirements of the regulations can be met using either of the following approaches:

**Prescriptive Approach.** The regulations allow builders to choose among three packages of energy conservation measures, each of which meet energy budget requirements.

**Performance Approach.** This approach gives a builder great flexibility in selecting a mix of design, materials and equipment that meet energy budget requirements. However, the builder must be able to demonstrate compliance with budget requirements.

#### **6.1.2 Quality of the Existing Housing Stock**

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD) has conducted a computer analysis 1980 Census of Population and Housing records to estimate the number of substandard housing units in the county (excluding Santa Rosa).

The criteria for identifying substandard units included:

- lack of plumbing facilities;
- overcrowding (1.01+ persons per room); and
- for owner-occupied units, an age/value criterion that tabulated all units built before 1940 valued at less than \$30,000;
- for renter-occupied units, a rent/income criterion that correlated low-income occupants to low rents.

The results of the analysis, shown in Table 6.1, indicate that 5,180 housing units (5.8 percent of all units) meet the criteria for classification as substandard housing. The methodology employed in generating estimates of substandard housing is likely, however, to understate the total number of substandard units. Of the identified units, more than 95 percent were classified as suitable for rehabilitation. More than four out of every ten of these units were occupied by very low- or lower-income households.

**TABLE 6.1: Substandard Housing Units, 1980**

Tenure Type	Suitable For Rehabilitation			Not Suitable For Rehabilitation		Total
	Total Occupied	Occupied By Lower Income Household	Vacant	Occupied	Vacant	
Owner	3,321	1,262	43	130	2	3,496
Renter	1,600	928	21	62	1	1,684
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,921</b>	<b>2,190</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5,180</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

To determine the probable distribution of substandard units in unincorporated areas of the county, four census variables were used to rank such areas:

- percentage of units lacking kitchen facilities;
- percentage of units with 1/2 bath or less;
- percentage of units without central heating constructed before 1939; and
- total percentage of units constructed before 1939.



The results of this analysis indicate that the unincorporated Santa Rosa, Russian River, Sonoma Valley and Sebastopol planning areas probably have the highest concentrations of substandard units. In general, this corresponds with the distribution of code violation complaints received by the Building Department between January 1 and September 30, 1984. Of 47 complaints received, 26 percent were in the Santa Rosa area, 57 percent were divided equally among the Russian River, Sebastopol and Petaluma areas, and 11 percent were from the Sonoma Valley area, with just six percent from the remaining four planning areas combined. The only anomaly in these data is the high incidence of violations (19 percent of all reported) in the Petaluma planning area.

## **6.2 Maintaining and Improving Housing Quality: Constraints and Opportunities**

### **6.2.1 New Construction**

The increasing cost of new housing encourages construction without proper permits, perhaps in violation of standards established by construction codes. In this sense, market factors act as a constraint on the quality of some new residential units. Principal opportunities affected by the market include manufactured housing techniques, which reduce the per unit costs of compliance with applicable codes, and innovative energy conservation materials and techniques, which can lower costs of compliance with Title 24 requirements.

**Siting and Structural Requirements.** County government's role in the construction of new housing involves the administration of plans, ordinances and codes designed to ensure sound construction. Opportunities for maintaining high levels of quality in new residential construction are:

- Continued enforcement of plan, ordinance and code requirements;
- Utilization of the development review process to assure that new residential construction is authorized only in areas known to be free of environmental hazards (for example: fault zones, slope instability, unstable or impermeable soils, or high noise levels) and incompatible land-uses.

**Energy Conservation.** The Title 24 Energy Conservation requirements ensure that effective conservation measures will be incorporated in the design of new units. However, active or passive solar designs may be ineffective if access to sunlight is blocked by subsequent construction. An opportunity to preserve access to sunlight is provided by the California Solar Rights Act of 1978 (Government Code, Section 65850.5), which allows local governments to adopt an ordinance permitting the dedication of solar easements as a condition of approval of tentative subdivision maps.

Opportunities to reduce the cost of energy conservation measures in both new and existing units include the following tax incentives:

- the state Solar Energy Tax Credit provides up to 50 percent of the cost of specified solar energy systems, or \$3000, (less any federal tax credit taken), whichever is less (expires December 31, 1986).
- the state Conservation Tax Credit provides up to 35 percent of the cost of specified energy conservation measures (eg. insulation and weatherstripping), or \$1,500, whichever is less (expires December 31, 1985).
- the state Solar System Property Tax Exemption exempts specified systems (eg. solar water heating, photovoltaic cells) from property taxation or inclusion in reassessments (expires December 31, 1986).
- the federal Residential Conservation Tax Credit provides a 15 percent tax reduction for specified conservation measures (eg. insulation, weatherstripping), to a maximum of \$300 (expires December 31, 1985).

### 6.2.2 Existing Housing Stock

Since county government has primary responsibility for enforcing construction and health codes, constraints on maintaining the quality of the existing stock involve situations in which applicable codes are not enforced or are enforced flexibly so as to assure continued availability of units (see discussion of farmworker housing needs in Subsection 5.2.5). Market factors that constrain maintenance and improvement of the existing housing stock include the costs of labor and materials required to make needed repairs, and the costs of any financing required for maintenance or rehabilitation expenditures. In some instances rent levels obtained for units may not be sufficient to justify expenditures based upon an owner's investment criteria. Market opportunities for reducing these costs are limited to two energy conservation programs operated by PG&E:

- the Zero-Interest Program (ZIP) provides no-interest loans of up to \$3500 per unit for insulation, weatherproofing, thermal doors or windows, and other conservation measures. Loan payments are added to utility bills.
- the Cashback program provides cash rebates of up to \$300 in exchange for installation of ceiling insulation and two of the following: caulking, weatherstripping, water heater blankets or low-flow showerheads. If ceiling insulation is infeasible, three of the other conservation measures are required.

Governmental opportunities for improving the quality of the existing housing stock include the CDBG-funded rehabilitation loan program and use of tax increment funds from proposed redevelopment projects in the Windsor, Roseland and Sonoma Valley areas. State redevelopment law requires that 20 percent of tax increment revenues be used to provide low and moderate income housing, and a portion or all of this requirement could be met through housing rehabilitation programs. Conservation measures are also eligible for funding under the county's existing rehabilitation loan program. However, a combination of zero-interest loans from PG&E and federal and state tax credits

is likely to provide the least costly means of financing energy-conserving improvements to existing units in many cases. However, PG&E and other programs will not provide energy conservation assistance to households occupying units with structural deficiencies; thus many lower-income residents (who do not benefit from tax credits) are ineligible. In these cases, the County's rehabilitation loan program is the sole source of assistance for structural repairs needed to allow low-income households to benefit from PG&E and other conservation programs.

### **6.3 Housing Quality: County Objectives and Policies**

#### **6.3.1: Quality of New Residential Construction**

The principal policy issues related to new construction are:

- the level of quality in new construction necessary to ensure sound housing and minimize long-term maintenance and energy costs.
- the design of new housing projects, including internal site design and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

#### **Objective 6A: Quality of New Residential Construction** **Addresses Goal(s) 9-12**

It is the County's objective that all new residential construction meet minimum quality standards of adopted health and construction codes, but to allow some flexibility in construction methods for dwellings located on large parcels in rural areas (e.g. Class K housing).

#### **Policy 6A1: Code Enforcement** **Program Reference(s): 23 and 28**

It is the County's policy to maintain the requirements contained in all adopted health and construction codes.

#### **Policy 6A2: Residential Development Permit Review Procedures** **Program Reference(s): 32-33 and existing review procedures.**

It is the County's policy to utilize environmental, subdivision, design review and other permit review procedures to encourage:

- (a) Internal design of new residential projects to provide a healthy, comfortable and secure residential environment, with adverse traffic, noise and other environmental impacts mitigated in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its implementing guidelines;
- (b) Design of new residential projects which conserves the positive environmental and cultural qualities of existing residential neighborhoods by being substantially compatible with the surrounding natural and built environment.
- (c) Implementation of Title 24 energy conservations requirements of state law and provision for the dedication of solar access easements where appropriate.



### 5.3.2: Quality of the Existing Housing Stock

Policy issues related to the quality of the existing housing stock include:

- the need for precise data on the scale and extent of substandard housing in unincorporated areas; and
- the means for ensuring maintenance of existing sound units and the rehabilitation (where feasible) of existing substandard units.

Objective 6.2 below calls for rehabilitation of 25 percent of existing substandard units; the intent is to achieve market rehabilitation of 915 units through enforcement of existing construction codes and to provide financial assistance to rehabilitate another 400 substandard units which are occupied by lower-income households. This latter target is based on the number of units whose rehabilitation is likely to be funded through existing programs over the 1984-90 period, as estimated by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission.

#### **Objective 6B: Rehabilitation of Substandard Units**

**Implements Goal(s): 8 and 10**

It is the County's objective to encourage rehabilitation of 1,300 existing units with structural or other deficiencies during the next six years, restoring them to sound condition in accordance with the requirements of adopted health and construction codes.

#### **Policy 6B1: Conversion of Seasonal Housing Units**

**Program Reference(s): 28**

It is the County's policy that when seasonal housing units which conform to applicable zoning regulations are structurally modified for the purpose of enabling year-round occupancy, the modifications shall comply with adopted health and construction codes.

#### **Policy 6B2: Consolidation of County Enforcement Activities**

**Program Reference(s): 23 and 28**

It shall be the policy of the County, after review of alternative administrative arrangements, to designate one county department or agency as having primary responsibility for inspection and abatement of substandard housing

#### **Policy 6B3: Replacement of Substandard Affordable Housing Units**

**Program Reference(s): 10, 13-20, 23 and 29**

It is the County's policy to give priority to residents of substandard affordable units who are displaced by code enforcement or redevelopment activities in the selection for occupants of new housing units in assisted housing projects.

**Policy 6B4: Energy Conservation in the Existing Housing Stock**  
**Program Reference(s): 19 and 29-31**

It is the County's policy to utilize to the fullest extent possible available state and federal energy conservation programs in order to weatherize to minimum standards housing units built prior to the effective date of Title 24 energy conservation requirements.

**Policy 6B5: Coordination of Energy Conservation and Rehabilitation Programs**  
**Program Reference(s): 10, 19 and 29-31**

It is the County's policy to coordinate housing rehabilitation programs with residential energy conservation programs so that the needs of households eligible for energy conservation assistance, but unable to receive it due to structural problems, are addressed.

**Policy 6B6: Financial Assistance for Rehabilitation of Substandard Housing Units**  
**Program Reference(s): 10, 19 and 29-31**

It is the County's policy to utilize to the fullest possible extent state and federal programs that provide financial assistance to rehabilitate substandard housing; additionally, the County shall utilize local revenue sources such as mortgage revenue bonds and redevelopment tax increment bonds to provide financial assistance to rehabilitate substandard units occupied by low- or moderate-income households.

### **6.3.3 Neighborhood Conservation**

Measures that enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods encourage long-term maintenance of housing. The County has adopted a redevelopment program which will finance neighborhood improvements in the Windsor, Roseland and Boyes Hot Springs areas.

**Objective 6C: Neighborhood Conservation**  
**Implements Goal(s): 8-11 and 28**

It is the County's objective to concentrate the major share of its housing assistance and public improvement activities (including financial assistance for residential rehabilitation, per Policy 6B6) in a limited number of neighborhoods in order to achieve a maximum impact from expenditures. These "target neighborhoods," identified in Figure 2, are: Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano, Roseland/South Wright Road, Bellvue Windsor, Guerneville/Rio Nido, Graton, and Monte Rio.

**Policy 6C1: Redevelopment Projects**  
**Program Reference(s): 29**

It is the County's policy to establish redevelopment project areas in blighted portions of the Roseland, Windsor, and Boyes Hot Springs communities; at least 20 percent of the tax increment revenues shall be utilized for housing purposes and the remainder for public facility or business improvements that generally benefit the subject areas.

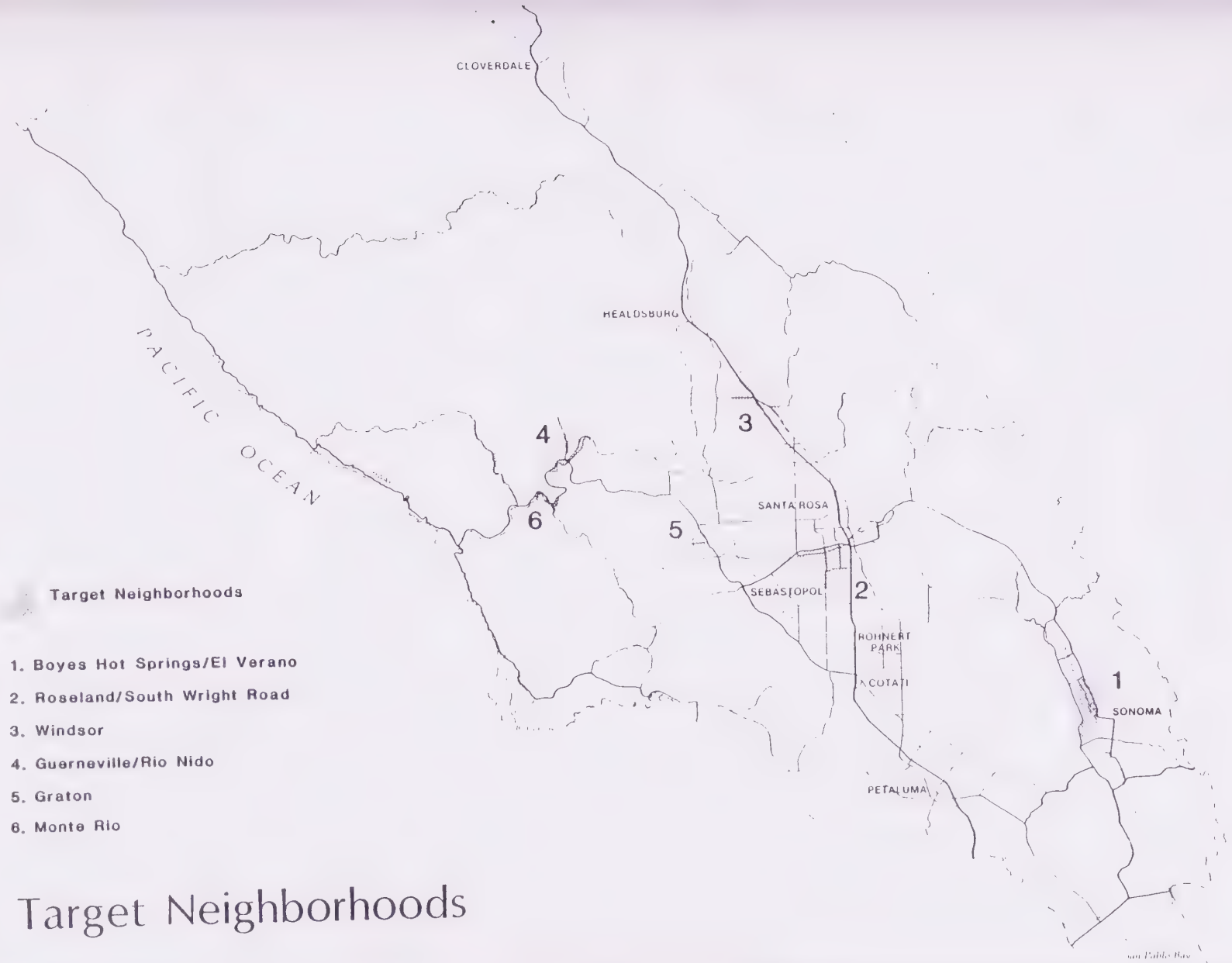


Figure 2



## **7.0 PROVISION OF VARIETY AND CHOICE IN RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS**

Among the many qualities that make Sonoma County a desirable place to live is the wide range of choice in residential living environments. Issues of housing variety and choice fall into three categories:

- choice of residential locations (urban vs. rural);
- choice of structure types (single family vs. multi-family structures, conventional vs. manufactured construction); and
- choice of tenure forms (ownership vs. rental).

### **7.1 Assessment of Housing Variety and Choice**

#### **7.1.1 Choice of Residential Locations**

The unincorporated portion of Sonoma County contains a variety of communities which provide residential settings intermediate between the urban-style neighborhoods of cities such as Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Petaluma and rural housing. These unincorporated communities range from Roseland/South Santa Rosa, near the urban end of the spectrum, to very small and sometimes isolated rural communities such as Bloomfield and Cazadero. In addition, the following communities are designated in the land-use element: Boyes Hot Springs/El Verano/Aqua Caliente, Glen Ellen, Kenwood, Larkfield/Wikiup, Windsor, Geyserville, Forestville, Guerneville, Monte Rio, Jenner, Bodega Bay, Bodega, Valley Ford, Freestone, Occidental, Graton, and Penngrove. The land-use element authorizes residential uses and densities in these communities which are similar to those of urban areas, along with related commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. Although some "infill" development may occur, the growth potential in the majority of these rural places is limited by densities which may be accommodated with individual septic waste-disposal systems or by the capacities of their small-scale wastewater collection and treatment facilities.

The housing site survey data in Section 3.1 show that the development potential of housing sites in unincorporated urban areas totals at least 11,600 units, while the development potential of rural sites (excluding sites in agricultural or timber production areas) totals at least 22,300 units. The total development potential of all identified sites is 33,900 units.

#### **7.1.2 Choice of Structure Types**

Data from the 1980 Census indicated that nearly three-fourths of all housing units in the unincorporated county were single-family homes, 8.4 percent were mobile homes, and 17.8 percent were in multi-unit structures (including

duplexes). Data on construction activity since 1980 show that single family dwellings accounted for 78 percent of all new construction, with multi-family units and mobile homes comprising 15 and 7 percent respectively. Although the slow rate of multi-family construction between 1980 and 1984 probably reflected the 1981-83 building industry recession, these data suggest that single-family units will continue to comprise a high proportion of all housing units in unincorporated areas.

Data on types of construction (conventional or "stick-built" vs. manufactured) are difficult to interpret, since modular units constructed to uniform building code standards are not distinguished from conventionally-constructed units. However, the number of mobile homes installed on private lots has rebounded from a low of 15 in 1982 to 67 in 1983. However, the supply of spaces in mobile home parks has remained relatively static since 1980. The most recent activity involves a 54-space expansion of a park in the Windsor community, which was completed in 1984. The only other mobile home park project under consideration in 1984 was a proposed 141-space park in the Santa Rosa planning area.

### 7.1.3 Choice of Tenure Types

Data from the 1980 Census show that 67.4 percent of housing units in unincorporated areas were owner-occupied, while 32.6 percent were renter-occupied. The relationship of unit types to tenure can be summarized as follows:

**TABLE 7.1: TENURE OF OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY STRUCTURE TYPE, 1980**

<u>Structure Type</u>	<u>Owner Occupied</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>Renter Occupied</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Mobile Home	3,387	(82.1)	740	(17.9)	4,127	(100.0)
Single Family	27,518	(75.6)	8,880	(24.4)	36,398	(100.0)
Multi-Family	2,327	(26.6)	6,423	(73.4)	8,750	(100.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,232</b>	<b>(67.4)</b>	<b>16,043</b>	<b>(32.6)</b>	<b>49,276</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Sonoma County Planning Department, from STF 3A, Bureau of the Census

The need for construction of new rental units over the 1984-90 period is estimated to be approximately 1,800\* units, or about 42 percent of total 1984-90 construction needs (4,355 units). This results in an average annual need for construction of over 300 rental units in unincorporated areas.

\* Assumes rental housing needs are equal to 80 percent of lower-income and 50% of moderate-income households expected to move to the county, plus existing renter households, minus 1980 rental stock and 1980-84 rental housing construction activity (given that the tenure distribution of new units is the same as that in the 1980 Census for each structure type).

## **7.2 Assuring Housing Variety and Choice: Constraints and Opportunities**

### **7.2.1 Choice of Residential Locations**

Since the market places a high value on rural housing, rural land prices and unit sales prices and rents for otherwise comparable dwellings tend to be higher than in urban areas. High housing costs plus the relatively low proportion of rural units that are rentals may constrain consumer choice of residential locations. Although lower ownership costs and rents can be achieved through use of manufactured housing or construction under the Class K ordinance, resulting construction cost savings will not entirely offset the effect of high land costs. Thus, it is unlikely that rural housing will be a realistic option for most low and moderate income households in the future.

Indications are that the development potential on identified rural sites is adequate to accommodate households able to afford rural housing through 2005. Rural housing opportunities could be expanded by increasing the number of housing sites in rural areas, which might encourage lower land prices. However, as pointed out in Section 4.2, an increased supply of rural housing sites would not significantly reduce land prices unless total demand (including speculative demand) were to remain constant or diminish - an assumption not supported by recent trends.

### **7.2.2 Choice of Structure Types**

Data from the 1980 Census show that single-family dwellings and mobile homes comprise 82 percent of all housing units in the unincorporated county. In July 1984, the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco estimated the countywide multi-family vacancy rate at 2%. In 1985 Laventhal-Horwath produced a detailed study of Sonoma County's multiple family housing stock which revealed a vacancy rate of nearly 6 percent. In 1985 Laventhal-Horwath concluded that the multiple family vacancy rate would reach 13 percent by the end of 1986 if all approved multiple family projects are constructed. The foregoing would seem to indicate the market's sensitivity to consumer demand.

Government land-use policies constrain the total number and development potential of housing sites available for multi-family development. But since sites identified in Table 3.2 may not include all existing multi-family sites, and since multi-family development can occur at low (i.e. 1-6 units/acre) as well as high densities, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the adequacy of the current supply. However, adoption of the proposed Windsor Specific Plan, which would increase the development potential of urban sites by 8,865 units, should ensure a more than adequate countywide supply of multi-family housing sites through 2005. However, as noted in Section 3.2, the distribution of urban housing sites among unincorporated planning areas is an issue that should be addressed in future updates of specific plans. The development potential of identified sites can be increased by up to 30 percent through use of the County's density bonus policy.



### 7.2.3 Choice of Tenure or Form of Ownership

It is difficult to assess data on tenure types, since the form of tenure has no direct correlation with structure type. Regardless of ownership form -- in fee, condominium, or cooperative -- a dwelling may be occupied by either its owner or a tenant. While 1980 Census data appear to reflect a healthy range of choice between ownership and rental housing opportunities, this balance is subject to short-term change if existing single or multi-family rentals are sold to owner-occupants. Census data on "single-family, attached" units (assumed to include most condominiums) indicate that a remarkably high proportion of these units (76.1%) are rented. This could reflect either:

- the attractiveness of these units as investments for individual investors and their ability to "outbid" households which might otherwise purchase units; or
- high demand for multi-family rentals that is not satisfied by available apartment units; or
- low demand by potential owner-occupants for this form of housing.

Comments of local realtors indicated that all these factors may have been at work in 1984, while data on 1980-84 construction trends indicate that the market is probably not producing enough new rental housing to substantially alter the current range of tenure choices.

Data from subsection 7.1.2 indicate that the total 1984-90 need for new rental housing may be as much as 1,800 units. The demand for additional rental housing may be met by conversions of existing units from owner to renter occupancy and by construction of new rental units. Except for "second units", new construction for rental occupancy is likely to be multi-unit structures. The proposed Windsor Specific Plan, if adopted, would increase the overall development potential of multi-family housing sites to 5,041 units, but would not ensure the construction of rental housing on these sites. Should an acute shortage of rental housing develop, state law (Government Code, Section 66452.50) permits local governments to mandate renter occupancy of condominium units for a maximum of ten years after construction.

An additional non-governmental constraint on the supply of rental housing is the potential for conversion of existing multi-family rental units to condominium ownership. Although state law (Government Code, Section 66452.51) establishes equitable procedures for such conversions, it is the responsibility of a local government to determine whether the rate and scale of conversions threaten the supply of rental housing to an extent which justifies local controls on conversions. Under the zoning ordinance in effect as of 1984, the County requires a use permit for condominium conversions. Although the number of conversions in unincorporated areas from 1980 to 1984 was small (3 projects, totalling 40 units, plus 1 project of 24 units in progress), rental housing needs warrant monitoring of future conversion proposals.

Another aspect of tenure choice is the availability of spaces in mobile home parks. Data from Subsection 7.1.3 indicate that 82.1 percent of all mobile home units were owner-occupied in 1980, while a January 1984 Planning Department survey indicates that at least 75.2 percent of all mobile homes are in mobile home parks. The mobile home park thus represents a unique tenure situation, in which a unit is typically owned by its occupants, while the land on which it is located is rented from the park owner. The January 1984 survey revealed an overall vacancy rate of 2.5 percent in mobile home parks, indicating that there is considerable demand for park spaces. However, there has been no recent construction of new parks, and little developer interest in such projects. Given recent protests over rents for spaces in existing parks, this suggests that developers do not believe that current market rents for park spaces are sufficient to make development of new parks economically feasible. An opportunity for increasing the number of available spaces and stabilizing space costs is condominium ownership, which would allow mobile home occupants to purchase air rights to a park space.

### **7.3: Housing Variety and Choice: County Objectives and Policies**

#### **7.3.1: Choice of Residential Environments**

Although the current balance of rural and urban housing sites and opportunities appears adequate to accomodate projected demand through 1990, the lack of comprehensive land-use data make the adoption of a specific objective impractical.

##### **Policy 7A1: Choice of Residential Environments** **Program Reference(s): 1 and 2**

It is the County's policy to provide a range of rural and urban housing opportunities by assuring that a sufficient number of sites are designated for residential use; the County's policy emphasizes city and community-centered residential development while discouraging scattered residential uses in agricultural and other resource areas.

#### **7.3.2: Choice of Structure Types**

Building activity data indicate that conventional single-family housing continues to comprise a high proportion (78.1%) of all new residential construction. However, there is a pressing need for affordable housing, which can be most efficiently provided in multi-family structures, or in manufactured single family units. Principal policy issues are the level of multi-family development that should be sought, and the content and application of regulations for manufactured housing.

##### **Objective 7B: Multi-Family Residential Development** **Addresses Goal(s): 5, 6, 7 and 15**

The County shall encourage development of sufficient housing units in multi-family structures in an effort to ensure that such units comprise 30 percent of all residential development over the 1984-90 period (895 multi-family units).

**Policy 7B1: Designation of Sites For Multi-Family Housing Development**  
**Program Reference(s): 1-3**

It is the County's policy in reviewing and updating its specific plans to identify lands that may be suitable for multi-family residential development. All such sites shall be located within urban service areas.

**Policy 7B2: Manufactured Housing**  
**Program Reference(s): 8**

It is the County's policy to encourage construction of manufactured housing on permanent foundations, subject to existing zoning ordinance and design requirements; such housing may be constructed in any area of the county.

**7.3.3: Choice of Tenure**

Although home ownership remains an important social objective, it is equally important to accomodate the needs of households that cannot afford to own their homes. In addition, the balance between total supply and total demand in each sector determines the degree of mobility in the housing market, and directly affects housing prices and rents.

**Objective 7C: Housing Tenure**  
**Addresses Goal(s): 5, 6 and 14**

It is the County's objective that the proportion of year-round housing units available for renter occupancy not fall below 1980 levels (33.4%).

**Policy 7C1: Market Orientation of New Residential Development**  
**Program Reference(s): Implementation through existing review procedures.**

It is the County's policy that housing development applications shall identify the segment of the housing market to which their projects are oriented and the intended tenure of proposed units.

**Policy 7C2: Conversions of Housing to Condominium Ownership**  
**Program Reference(s): 8**

Although it is the County's objective to conserve rental housing, the policy shall be not to establish regulatory controls which restrict conversions of rental projects to condominium ownership; the County shall continue to require a use permit for conversion, thus allowing consideration of the potential effects of each proposed conversion on the supply of rental housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households.



## **8.0 THE SONOMA COUNTY HOUSING PROGRAM: 1984-90**

### **8.1 Evaluation of 1979-83 Program**

Table 8.1 summarizes progress made towards implementation of the 1978-83 housing program, as set forth in the 1978 Housing Element. Evaluation of program accomplishments is complicated by the fact that the County's Community Development Commission administers a variety of programs (including Community Development Block Grants) for all incorporated cities in the County except Santa Rosa. Thus, although Table 8.1 may indicate positive action on a program component, some program activities may not have addressed the housing needs within unincorporated areas. It is not clear whether program targets established in 1978 reflected this administrative issue.

Full achievement of 1978 targets was hindered by several factors:

- high interest rates for construction and purchase financing;
- the effects of the 1981-83 recession on the building industry, and
- the discontinuation of many state and federal housing assistance programs after 1980, as a result of economic conditions or legislative decisions.

In the case of conventional public housing, which must be authorized by voter referendum, the wording of the referendum approved in 1980 precluded use of funds from HUD's conventional public housing program - the sole source of federal funds for such housing.

### **8.2 The 1984-90 Housing Program**

A six-year time frame was selected for the housing program so that the program period would coincide with the 1990 Census. Program objectives are based on conservative estimates of available resources over the program period. Program timeframes reflect fiscal years (July 1 - June 30).

#### **8.2.1 Overview of Housing Program**

Table 8.2 provides summary information on the proposed 1984-90 housing program. Detailed program descriptions are provided in Subsections 8.2.2 - 8.2.6.

PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCE	TARGET UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	ACTUAL UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	COMMENTS
1) Bankable Loans	Housing Conservation	Direct interest subsidy on loans to reduce borrowing cost.	Community Development Block Grant	-27 -150	-13 -47	Plus 38 in cities.
2) Delayed Payment Loans	Housing Conservation	Funds for housing rehabilitation; no monthly payments; 1% interest.	Community Development Block Grant	-15 -150	-9 -47	Plus 43 in cities.
3) Self-Help Rehabilitation	Housing Conservation	Subsidized interest rate and technical assistance	Community Development Block Grant and State Dept. of Housing and Community Development	-19 -300	-43 -140	
4) Inclusionary Zoning	Regulation	Require a percentage of new units to be affordable to low income households	701 Grant	-0 -200	-0 -20	Voluntary density bonus provision in R3 district; cur- rently being revised.
5) Anti-Discrimination Ordinance	Regulation	Preclude rental hous- ing discrimination against families with children.	None	N/A*	N/A*	Accomplished by State Supreme Court ruling.
6) Alternative Building Standards	Regulation	Relax Building Code requirements.	None	-0 -100	-0 -2	Ordinance 2875 adopt- ed 9/15/81; units de- pend on builder applications.
7) Article 34 Referendum	Regulation	Voter approval of local participation housing construction.	None	-0 -400	-0 -0 -400 Pro- jected	Referendum approval by voters in 11/80.
8) Low Cost Housing Economic Development Corporation	Capacity Building	Direct and joint venture participation in building and reha- bilitating housing.	Community Development Block Grant	-0 -250	-0 -0 -70 Pro- jected	Burbank Housing Development Corp- oration.

\*NA = Not Applicable

(Continued)

TABLE 8.1: SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION 1978-84

PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCE	ACTUAL UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	ACTUAL UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	COMMENTS
9) CHFA Home Improvement	Housing Conservation	Bond-funded purchase of qualified loans made by local lenders in targeted areas.	CHFA tax-exempt revenue bonds	-0 -100	-0 -0	CHFA reoriented program in 1980.
10) Rental Housing Assistance Program	Housing Conservation	Investment counseling; subsidized interest rate loans; Section 8 assistance; code enforcement.	Community Development Block Grant	-15 -150	-0 -35	34 units funded in cities; counseling and code enforcement not funded by County.
11) Section 312 loans	Housing Conservation	Direct subsidized interest rate loans from HUD through County.	HUD Section 312	-10 -100	-0 -0	County eligibility began in 1981, but program funding mechanism changed.
12) Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation	Housing Conservation	Section 8 rent subsidies to tenants of moderately rehabilitated units.	HUD Section 8	-100 -300	-0 -73	Only 73 units approved by HUD; targets unrealistic.
13) Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation	Housing Conservation	Section 8 rent subsidies to tenants of substantially rehabilitated units.	HUD Section 8	-0 -100	-0 -0	Program based on private sector applications--none received. Discontinued by federal government in 1981.
14) Housing Finance Bond Feasibility Study	Housing Conservation and New Construction	Sale of local tax-exempt bonds to finance new construction and rehabilitation.	Tax-exempt bonds	-0 -500	-0 -98 -250 Projected from first bond issue	\$20 million bond issue sold in 1983; \$57 million sale planned for 5/84; major participation by city of Santa Rosa.
15) Assisted Housing Site Acquisition	New Construction	Locate, acquire and improve sites for developers and owner-builders of housing for low and moderate income households.	Community Development Block Grant	-60 -400	-0 -0	Never implemented due to insufficient community Development Block Grant funds.

(Continued)



PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCE	TARGET UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	ACTUAL UNITS: -YEAR 1 -YEAR 1-5	COMMENTS
16) Equity Sharing	New Construction	Equity contributions by State from revenue bond proceeds used to assist home purchasers; recapture of equity and appreciation on sale.	State revenue bonds	-0 -100	-0 -0	Target predated state funding criteria; funding subsequently targeted to mobile home park conversions.
17) Owner/Builder Assistance Program	New Construction	Contributions of labor by borrowers of low-interest loans under FMIA Section 502	Farmers' Home Administration Section 502	-10 -50	-12 -23 -12 projected	Funded and on-going.
18) Multi-Family Financing Vehicles	New Construction	HUD and FMIA mortgage and rental assistance programs; CHFA financing and Section 8 set-asides, local tax-exempt bond financing. Technical assistance by staff.	HUD Section 8 and FMIA mortgage and rent assistance programs; CHFA funding; local tax-exempt bonds	-0 -75	-0 -173 -331 projected	CHFA Program based on private sector applications-none received. HUD, FMIA funded completed units; tax-exempt bonds will fund projected units.
19) Housing Services Corporation	Housing Services	Fair housing; emergency shelter; landlord/tenant counseling	Community Development Block Grant; CETA Section 8 Reserves.	N/A*	N/A*	Sonoma County Rental Information and Medication Service (SCRIMS) initiated in 1982 to provide fair housing and rental mediation services; county contracts w/Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity (SCPEO) for emergency shelter-funded with revenue sharing money.

\*N/A = Not Applicable

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TABLE 8.2: THE SONOMA COUNTY HOUSING PROGRAM: 1984-90 SUMMARY

Program	Addresses Housing Objective(s)	Target Population(s) and/or Area(s)	Responsible Agency(ies)	Funding Source	Time Frame (fiscal years)	1984-90 Program Objective(s)
(1) General Plan Update	Supply and geographic distribution of housing; production of affordable housing.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1985-87	Adoption of updated General Plan elements.
(2) Specific Plan Updates	Supply and geographic distribution of housing; production of affordable housing.	South Sonoma Valley (Areas 1 & 2), Forestville and Sonoma Mountain.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1986-88	Adoption of updated specific plans.
(3) Urban Land Monitoring Program	Supply and geographic distribution of housing.	Urban service areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1985-86 & ongoing.	Establishment of on-going monitoring program.
(4) Annual Report on Wastewater Management Services	Supply and geographic distribution of housing.	Unincorporated urban service areas.	Planning and Public Works Departments	Dept. budgets	1985-86 & ongoing.	Preparation of annual reports.
(5) Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance and Monitoring Program	Supply and geographic distribution of housing.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1984-85 & ongoing.	Ongoing evaluation of ordinance; continuation of monitoring program.
(6) Community Development Committee	Production of affordable housing.	Low and moderate income households; countywide	Community Development Commission	Agency budget	1984-85 & ongoing.	Input to Board of Supervisors regarding affordable housing production problems and opportunities.
(7) Density Bonus Ordinance and Monitoring Program	Production of affordable housing.	Low and moderate income households; unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1984-85 & ongoing.	Preparation and adoption of ordinance and monitoring of development activity.
(8) Zoning Ordinance Revision	Production of affordable housing.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1985-87	Preparation and adoption of revised Zoning Ordinance.
(9) Subdivision Ordinance Revision	Production of affordable housing.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1985-86	Preparation and adoption of revised Subdivision Ordinance.

(Continued)

Program	Housing Objective(s)	and/or Area(s)	Agency(ies)	Funding Source	(fiscal years)	Program Objective(s)
(10) Administration Coordination, & Financing of Assisted Housing Programs	Production and conservation of affordable housing.	Low- and moderate-income households; countywide (including all cities except Santa Rosa).	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget	1984-85 & ongoing.	Administration and coordination of housing programs, including financing assistance.
(11) Housing Mediation & Referral Services	Elimination of housing discrimination; conservation of affordable rental housing.	Unincorporated Areas.	Sonoma County Rental Information & Mediation Services (SCRIMS)	Agency budget (Community Development Block Grants)	1984-85 & ongoing.	Develop mechanism for rental mediation service in FY 1985-86; continuation of anti-discrimination services.
(12) Coastal Development Guidelines	Conservation of affordable housing.	Low- and moderate-income households; coastal zone.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget	1985-86	Amendment of Coastal Specific Plan to include guidelines for determining the feasibility of replacing affordable housing units proposed for demolition or conversion.
(13) Mortgage Revenue Bond Programs	Production of affordable housing.	Low- and moderate-income households; unincorporated areas.	Community Development Commission.	Revenues from sale of tax-exempt bonds.	1984-90	250 owner-occupied units; 550 multi-family rental units (20% for low & moderate income households)
(14) FmHA Loans (Section 515)	Production of affordable rental housing.	Low- and moderate-income households; unincorporated rural areas.	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget for administration; federal funds for loans.	1985-90	125 multi-family rental units.
(15) Farmworker Housing	Production of affordable farmworker housing.	Farmworker households; unincorporated rural areas.	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget for administration; federal FmHA 514/516 and state Farmworker Grant programs for funding.	1985-90	75 farmworker rental units.
(16) Self-Help Housing Loans	Production of affordable housing.	Low- and moderate-income households; unincorporated rural areas.	Community Development Commission; Burbank Housing Development Corporation.	Agency budgets for administration; FmHA & state Urban & Rural Pre-development Loan programs for loan funds.	1984-90	50 single-family ownership units.
(17) HCD Rental Housing Construction Program	Production of affordable rental housing.	Lower-income, elderly & handicapped renter households.	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget for administration; state HCD funds for loans.	1984-90	80 multi-family rental units.

(Continued)



TABLE 8.2: THE SONOMA COUNTY HOUSING PROGRAM: 1984-90 SUMMARY

Program	Addresses Housing Objective(s)	Target Population(s) and/or Area(s)	Responsible Agency(ies)	Funding Source	Time Frame (fiscal years)	1984-90 Program Objective(s)
(18) HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Existing Housing)	Reduction of excessive housing expenditures.	Lower-income renter households countywide, (including all cities except Santa Rosa).	Community Development Commission.	Federal funds for administration & rent subsidies.	1984-90 & ongoing.	125 rental units (in addition to 1984 existing units).
(19) HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Moderate Rehabilitation)	Reduction of excessive housing expenditures; rehabilitation of substandard units.	Lower-income renter households countywide, except Santa Rosa.	Community Development Commission.	Federal funds for administration, rehabilitation loans & rent subsidies.	1984-85 & ongoing.	60 rental units (in addition to existing units).
(20) HUD Conventional Public Housing	Production of affordable rental housing.	Very low-income renter households; unincorporated areas.	Community Development Commission.	General fund for referendum; agency budget for administration federal funds for construction.	1986-87	40 rental units.
(21) HUD Section 202 Loans	Production of affordable rental housing.	Lower-income elderly & handicapped persons; unincorporated.	Community Development Commission; Burbank Housing Development Corporation.	Agency budget for administration; federal funds for loans & rent subsidies.	1985-90	45 rental units.
(22) HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Aftercare)	Conservation of affordable rental housing.	Handicapped persons; countywide (including Santa Rosa).	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget for administration; state funds for subsidies.	Ongoing.	50 rental units (in addition to existing units).
(23) Abatement of Substandard Farmworker Housing	Conservation of affordable housing; rehabilitation of substandard units.	Farmworker households; unincorporated areas.	Building & Public Health Departments; County Counsel.	Dept. budgets.	1985-86	Clarify code enforcement responsibilities & procedures.
(24) Shared Housing Information Service	Reduction of excessive housing expenditures.	Low- and moderate-income, single parent and elderly households.	Community Development Commission	Agency budget.	1984-85 & ongoing.	Provide information and referral services regarding shared housing opportunities.
(25) Farmworker Housing Needs Assessment	Production of affordable housing.	Farmworker households.	City of Healdsburg; County of Sonoma; Burbank Housing Development Corp.	Community Development Block Grant.	1984-85 & ongoing.	Completion of Healdsburg area study; consideration of similar studies in other areas.
(26) Revision of Anti-Discrimination Language in Contracts & Agreements	Elimination of housing discrimination.	Unincorporated areas.	Community Development Commission; Planning Dept; County Counsel.	Agency budgets.	1984-85	Revise anti-discrimination language to include all forms of discrimination prohibited by state law.

		Addresses	Target Population(s)	Responsible	Funding Source	Time Frame	1984-90
		Housing Objective(s)	and/or Area(s)	Agency(ies)		(fiscal years)	Program Objective(s)
(27)	Emergency Shelter Program	Expansion of emergency shelter facilities.	Homeless persons countywide.	Sonoma County Council of Community Services.	Agency budgets.	1985-90	Add 88 emergency shelter beds countywide; monitor emergency shelter requests.
(28)	Code Enforcement	Improvement of housing quality; energy conservation.	Unincorporated areas.	Building & Public Health Depts.	Dept. Budgets.	1984-90 & ongoing	Enforce all adopted health & construction codes.
(29)	Redevelopment Projects	Conservation & production of affordable housing; rehabilitation of substandard housing.	Windsor, Roseland & Sonoma Valley Redevelopment Project Areas.	Community Development Commission.	Sale of tax-increment revenue bonds.	1984-90	Conserve, produce & rehabilitate affordable housing; quantified objectives to be determined.
(30)	HUD Rental Rehabilitation Program	Conservation of affordable rental housing.	Lower-income renter households countywide (including all cities except Santa Rosa).	Community Development Commission.	Agency budget for administration; federal funds for rehabilitation.	1984-90	165 rental units.
83 (31)	Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of substandard housing.	Lower-income households; targeted unincorporated areas.	Community Development Commission.	Community Development Block Grants.	1984-90	175 units.
(32)	Design Review Manual	Housing production; neighborhood conservation.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget.	1984-85	Preparation & publication of manual providing design review guidelines.
(33)	Solar Access Ordinance	Energy conservation.	Unincorporated areas.	Planning Dept.	Dept. budget.	1985-86	Preparation & adoption of ordinance permitting dedication of solar easements.

## 8.2.2 Programs Related to Housing Supply and Location

### Program 1: General Plan Update

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. Objectives of the General Plan Update include:

- revision of the text pertaining to all land-use categories to provide clearer directives as to allowable (and excluded) uses and residential densities, and to clarify policies and standards for new development;
- clarification of County land-use policies and development guidelines for unincorporated areas which lie within city spheres of influence; and
- revision of the land-use map to assure a more exact correspondence between the General Plan, adopted specific plans and zoning.

In addition to addressing basic policy issues such as the location and intensity of new development, these measures should reduce the number of General Plan administrative interpretations and appeals, reduce the caseload of the Planning Department, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and cut processing times for projects in affected areas by 3-12 weeks.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 3C, 4C, 5B, 5F and 7B

Policy Reference(s): 3A1, 3A2, 3C1, 3C2, 3C3, 4C2, 5B1, 5F1, 7A1 and 7B1

### Program 2: Specific Plan Updates

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. Where the Board of Supervisors deems it appropriate, specific plans adopted prior to or during the same year (1978) as the general plan will be updated. Objectives of these updates, and any subsequent updates of other specific plans, will include:

- identification of sites within existing urban service areas suitable for construction of new, moderate-density rental housing;
- evaluation of incentives (eg. density bonuses) for residential development on targeted vacant and underdeveloped sites; and
- consideration of locations where future expansion of urban service areas may be appropriate.

These measures should result in additional sites for moderate-density rental housing and in clarification of existing policies regarding expansion of urban service areas.



Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 3C, 4C, 5B, 5F and 7B

Policy Reference(s): 3A1, 3A2, 3C1, 3C2, 3C3, 4C2, 5B1, 5F1, 7A1 and 7B1

### **Program 3: Urban Land Monitoring Program**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description: This program has many objectives, two of which relate to housing: 1) identification of the number, location and development potential of all vacant housing sites in urban service areas, including surplus government-owned property; and 2) maintenance of the resulting data base by monitoring the location of residential development approvals. As funds are available, land-use surveys needed to identify housing sites will be conducted in conjunction with specific plan updates. Data collected will be stored and updated using the Planning Department's microcomputer. These measures will enable staff to prepare evaluations of existing and projected housing, infrastructure and public service needs in relation to available sites. In addition, the program will provide a useful source of information for housing developers in reviewing and selecting potential sites.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 3C, 4B, 4C and 7B

Policy References(s): 3A1, 3A2, 3C1, 3C2, 3C3, 4B3, 4C2 and 7B1

### **Program 4: Annual Report on Wastewater Management Services**

Responsible Agencies: Planning and Public Works Departments

Program Description: Although the County's adopted specific plans contain evaluations of public service needs, few contain detailed assessments of projected housing growth in relation to sewage collection treatment and disposal capacities and these are not updated on a regular basis. This program would compile and maintain the following data on facilities in each sanitation district which is located within the unincorporated portion of the county:

- dry weather design capacity;
- average daily dry weather flows;
- wet weather design capacity;
- average daily wet weather flows;
- storage capacity; and
- effluent disposal capacity
- district boundaries and sphere of influence

These data will be compared with projections of housing needs in each urban service area, providing an annual overview of the ability of each area to accommodate growth.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 3C, and 4C

Policy Reference(s) 3A1, 3A2, 3C1, 3A3 and 4C2

## **Program 5: Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance and Monitoring Program**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description: In December 1983 the County adopted a Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance which permits conversion or new construction of attached or detached second dwelling units, not exceeding 840 square feet in area, in most residential and agricultural zoning districts. After one year of operation, during which more than 200 applications were processed, the ordinance was reviewed by the Board of Supervisors in mid-1985; modifications of ordinance provisions reduced the maximum size of such units to 640 square feet, prohibited their construction in the Exclusive Agriculture zoning district and on parcels of two acres or less without water and sewer service, and made other changes in development standards and application procedures. This program includes preparation of future and further ordinance amendments authorized by the Board, evaluation of proposed amendments for potential effects on second unit production costs and affordability, and monitoring the location and potential public service impacts of second unit permit requests.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A and 3C

Policy Reference(s): 3A1 and 3C1

### **8.2.3. Programs Related to Housing Production Costs and Affordable Housing**

## **Program 6: Community Development Committee**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. The Community Development Committee, composed of one appointee from each supervisorial district, plus two Housing Authority tenants, currently reviews and makes recommendations on matters coming before the Board of Supervisors and the Community Development Commission. The intent of this program is to expand the responsibilities of the Committee to include monitoring the implementation of the 1984-90 Housing Program. This would entail discussion of and response to:

- (a) possible cuts in state or federal programs cited in the 1984-90 Housing Program; and
- (b) possible new opportunities for housing production, rehabilitation or conservation that may arise during the 1984-86 program period.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5C, and 5F

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 4C4, 5A1 and 5F1

## **Program 7: Density Bonus Ordinance and Monitoring Program.**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department and Community Development Commission

Program Description. This program will include preparation of a zoning ordinance amendment incorporating provisions of the density bonus policy set forth in Section 4.4.1 (Policy 4A1), and the establishment of a monitoring system to track the number and locations of residential projects producing affordable housing. The program will establish maximum rents to be charged

for the affordable units in rental projects based upon the percentage of bonus units granted. It will also establish maximum sales prices for the affordable units in an ownership project based upon the percentage of bonus units granted. These measures should increase the production of affordable units and facilitate future evaluations of the effectiveness of the bonus in increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A and 4A

Policy Reference(s): 3A1, 4A1 and 4A2

### **Program 8: Zoning Ordinance Revision**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description: A comprehensive review of the County Zoning Ordinance is now in progress. This program will add the following components to the revision effort:

- a review where appropriate of proposed provisions of the revised ordinance indicating estimated impacts on housing production cost; and
- an assessment of the production cost impacts of certain provisions of the existing ordinance, including density limits and use permit requirements for condominium projects and development incentives for congregate housing.

Addresses Objective(s): 4A, 4C, 5B, 7B and 7C

Policy Reference(s): 4A1, 4A2, 4A3, 4A5, 4A6, 4C2, 5B1, 7B2 and 7C2

### **Program 9: Subdivision Ordinance Revision**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. A comprehensive revision of the County Subdivision Ordinance is now in progress. This program will include a discussion of the impacts of proposed ordinance revisions on housing production costs.

Addresses Objective(s): 4A

Policy Reference(s): 4A2, 4A3, 4A5 and 4A6

### **Program 10: Administration and Coordination of Assisted Housing Programs**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: Commission staff currently administer all County-sponsored housing assistance programs, and provide administrative services to all cities in the county except Santa Rosa for the following programs:



- the Community Development Block Grant program;
- the mortgage revenue bond programs; and
- the Section 8 rent subsidy program.

This program component of the Housing Element would delegate these responsibilities to the Commission - as funds permit - over the 1984-90 program period.

Addresses Objective(s): 4B, 5F, 5G and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 4B1, 4B2, 4B5, 5F1, 5G1, 6B1, 6B5 and 6B6

### **Program 11: Housing Mediation and Referral Services**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Services (SCRIMS)

Program Description. Currently, SCRIMS provides voluntary mediation and referral services in cases of alleged housing discrimination and for tenant-landlord disputes. This program will expand these services by adding voluntary non-binding mediation in cases of rent increases alleged to exceed increases in the cost of owning and maintaining rental property. Implementation of this service will require the preparation of guidelines to determine the types of rental housing to be covered, and the circumstances under which voluntary mediation services will be provided. An important component of the program would involve notification to appropriate apartment or mobile home park owners' associations of all reported instances of excessive rent increases. Although the mediation process would be voluntary and non-binding for landlords, the desired effect is that notification of owners' association will encourage self-policing by the rental housing industry, and discourage the worst instances of excessive rent increases.

Addresses Objective(s): 4C and 5D

Policy Reference(s): 4C3 and 5D1

### **Program 12: Coastal Development Guidelines**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. The Coastal Specific Plan, adopted in 1980, requires replacement of low and moderate income housing units that are demolished, and prohibits condominium conversions unless they provide a "greater affordable housing opportunity". State legislation, adopted in 1982, contains similar provisions subject to four broadly-worded exemptions. However, the exemptions are inoperable if the local government determines that replacement is "feasible". This program would establish guidelines for determining the feasibility of replacing low and moderate income units proposed for demolition or conversion.

Addresses Objective(s): 4A

Policy Reference(s): 4A7

**Program 13: Mortgage Revenue Bond Program**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. Proceeds from the sale of tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds will continue to be used to:

- provide home loans to qualified home purchasers at interest rates up to three percentage points below prevailing market rates. Eligibility is limited to households with incomes less than 150 percent of the County median that have not owned a home within the last three years. Only newly constructed units are eligible for financing, with maximum sales prices limited by a formula based on the median sales price of new homes in the County.
- provide construction and/or permanent financing for rental housing at interest rates up to three percentage points below prevailing market rates. At least 20 percent of the units produced must be occupied by low- and moderate-income households for a period of ten years.

The Community Development Commission administers the mortgage revenue bond programs for the county and all incorporated cities except Santa Rosa. Two bond issues for owner-occupied housing, totalling \$76,670,200 were sold over the 1983-84 period. The unincorporated county's share of bond revenues will finance about 77 units. A \$12-13 million dollar bond issue for rental housing will be marketed in early 1985; this issue should provide financing for additional multi-family rental units in the unincorporated county. This program will provide for continuing administration of revenue bond activities, including the provision of technical assistance to cities, over the 1984-90 program period.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4C, 5A, 5E and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4C1, 5A1, 5E2 and 6B3

**Program 14: Farmers' Home Administration (FmHA) Loans (Section 515)**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. This FmHA program provides construction and permanent financing for multi-family rental housing for low- and moderate-income households in designated rural areas. Interest rates can be as low as one percent but all units financed must be occupied by lower-income households. Eligible rural areas in unincorporated portions of the county include Windsor, the Russian River area, Geyserville, the Sonoma Valley and coastal areas.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A and 5E

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 5A1, 5E2, and 6B3

### **Program 15: Farmworker Housing**

Responsible Agencies: Sonoma County Community Development Commission and Burbank Housing Development Corporation

Program Description: This program will use funding from two sources:

- The FMHA Section 514/516 program provides a combination of grants and loans to finance construction, rehabilitation or acquisition of rental housing for farmworkers in designated rural areas (see Program 14). A grant of up to 90% of the cost of a project is made, with the remainder loaned at 1% interest. Loans are repaid over a 33-year term.
- The State Farmworker Grant program provides funds for land acquisition and site improvements to non-profit and governmental agencies.

Addresses Objectives(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 5E, 5F and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 5E2, 5F1, 6B3, 6B4 and 6B5

### **Program 16: Farmers' Home Administration (FmHA) Self-Help Housing Loans**

Responsible Agencies: Community Development Commission and Burbank Housing Development Corporation

Program Description: This FmHA program provides construction and purchase financing for owner-built and -occupied housing in designated rural areas (see Program 14). Loans are available at rates as low as one percent to lower income households, who provide most construction labor under the supervision of technical advisers. Since most such projects are initiated by non-profit sponsors, developer profit and overhead costs are eliminated. Labor contributed by assisted households constitutes the down payment; mortgages, as of 1984, cannot exceed \$55,000.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 5E, 5F and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 5E2, 5F1 and 6B3

### **Program 17: HCD Rental Housing Construction Program**

Responsible Agencies: Sonoma County Community Development Commission and Burbank Housing Development Corporation

Program Description: This program, administered by the state Department of Housing and Community Development, provides grants and loans for the development of rental housing. Program limitations include:

- 30 percent or more of the units in each project must be reserved for occupancy by very low- or lower-income households;
- two-thirds or more of assisted units must be reserved for occupancy by very low-income households;



- between 20 and 30 percent of total units assisted by the program must be reserved for occupancy by elderly or handicapped households; and
- 20 percent or more of total units assisted by the program must be located in rural areas.

Addressed Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5E, 5C and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 5A1, 5C1, 5E2, and 6B3

**Program 18: HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Existing Housing)**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: This program provides rent subsidies to very low-income households which make up the difference between the "fair market rent" of a unit (as determined by HUD) and each household's "affordable" rent (30 percent of household income).

Addresses Objective(s): 4C, 5E and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 4C4, 5E2 and 6B3

**Program 19: HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Moderate Rehabilitation)**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. This program encourages rehabilitation of rental units by increasing the "fair market rent" of a unit following rehabilitation. Units are then occupied by very low-income households, whose rents are subsidized as described under Program 19 (Section 8 Existing Housing).

Addresses Objective(s): 4C, 5E, and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 4C4, 5E2, 6B3, 6B4, 6B5 and 6B6

**Program 20: HUD Conventional Public Housing/Referendum**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. Article 34 of the California Constitution requires voter approval of a referendum before a local government can build and own public housing for very low-income renter households. Sonoma County voters approved such a referendum for 400 housing units in 1980, but the wording of the referendum precluded use of funds from HUD programs, which are the principal source of funding for public housing projects. This program would result in a new referendum without the funding limitations of the 1980 ballot measure.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5E, 5F and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 4C4, 5A1, 5E2, 5F1 and 6B3

## 8.2.4 Programs Related to Distribution of Housing Services

### **Program 21: HUD Section 202 Loans**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: This program provides low-interest financing (as of 1984 - 9.25%) for the construction of non-profit rental housing for elderly and handicapped households, and provides rent subsidies for eligible residents.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, and 5A

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 4C4 and 5A1

### **Program 22: HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies (Aftercare)**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: A portion of Section 8 funds administered by the Community Development Commission are reserved for households with handicapped members. Other than this eligibility restriction, the operation of the program is the same as Section 8 Existing Housing (see Program 19).

Addresses Objective(s): 4C

Policy Reference(s): 4C4

### **Program 23: Abatement of Substandard Farmworker Housing**

Responsible Agencies: Building and Public Health Departments; County Counsel

Program Description: As discussed in Subsection 5.2.5, the circumstances under which County employees may enter and inspect farmworker housing under County jurisdiction require clarification. This program would identify alternatives for the enforcement of existing health, housing and construction codes.

Addresses Objective(s): 5F, 6A, and 6B

Policy Reference(s): 5F2, 6A1, 6B2 and 6B3

### **Program 24: Shared Housing Information Service**

Responsible Agency: Community Development Commission

Program Description: The Commission currently provides a message board service for persons seeking shared housing opportunities. This program consists of the continued provision of this service.

Addressed Objective(s): 4B

Policy Reference(s): 4B1

**Program 25: Farmworker Housing Needs Assessment**

Responsible Agencies: City of Healdsburg, County of Sonoma, Burbank Housing Development Corporation

Program Description. The County is co-sponsoring a study of farmworker housing needs with the City of Healdsburg; the Burbank Housing Development Corporation has been retained to prepare the study. Although this effort focuses on the Healdsburg area, it should serve as the basis for similar assessments in other areas of the County. The purpose of these efforts should be to identify means for insuring the production of affordable farmworker housing.

Addresses Objective(s): 5F

Policy Reference(s): 5F1 and 5F3

**Program 26: Revision of Housing Discrimination Language in Contracts and Agreements**

Responsible Agencies: Planning Department and Community Development Commission

Program Description. As discussed in Subsection 5.2.3, the standard language regarding housing discrimination in County contracts and development agreements does not include all forms of discrimination prohibited by state law. This program would revise the standard language to prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, age (except in mobile home parks and senior citizen housing developments as defined by state law), marital status, disease or handicaps.

Addresses Objective(s): 5D

Policy Reference(s): 5D1

**Program 27: Emergency Shelter Program**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Council of Community Services.

Program Description. As discussed in Subsection 5.1.7, available data indicate that there is a severe shortage of emergency shelter beds. However, these data are from 1983 and do not reflect current economic conditions. In addition, there is no program for monitoring emergency shelter needs on an ongoing basis. This program would include:

- preparation of proposals for expanding the current supply of emergency shelter beds, as expressed in objective 5.7; and
- establishment of an annual monitoring program by the Council to tabulate peak-month requests for emergency shelter received by member agencies.



Addresses Objective(s): 5G

Policy Reference(s): 5G1

## **8.2.5 Programs Related to Housing Quality**

### **Program 28: Code Enforcement**

Responsible Agencies: Building and Public Health Departments

Program Description. These agencies currently enforce adopted health and construction codes. This program consists of the ongoing inspection and resolution of all reported cases of substandard housing.

Addresses Objective(s): 5F, 6A, 6B and 6C

Policy Reference(s): 5F2, 5F3, 6B1, 6B3, and 6B6

### **Program 29: Redevelopment Projects**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: The County has recently designated three redevelopment project areas- Roseland, Windsor and Boyes Hot Springs, which contain a total of 1,850 dwelling units. State law mandates that 20 percent of tax increment funds generated by redevelopment be used to address the needs of low- and moderate-income households. These funds may be used for rehabilitation of existing housing, site acquisition, construction of new housing units, and construction of streets, curbs, sidewalks and other public facility improvements. This program includes the administration of redevelopment plans, funds and housing assistance and neighborhood conservation programs in project areas.

Addresses Objective(s): 3A, 4B, 4C, 6B, and 6C

Policy Reference(s): 3A3, 4B4, 4C1, 6B3, 6B4, 6B5, 6B6, and 6C1

### **Program 30: HUD Rental Rehabilitation**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description. The HUD program provides up to 50 percent of the funds needed to rehabilitate substandard rental units, in exchange for making rehabilitated units available for very low- and lower-income households receiving Section 8 rent subsidies.

Addresses Objective(s): 6B

Policy Reference(s): 6B4, 6B5, and 6B6

**Program 31: Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation**

Responsible Agency: Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Program Description: The County currently provides rehabilitation loans and grants to lower-income households living in substandard units in specific unincorporated areas. These activities are financed by CDBG funds, so the County has more discretion regarding their use than is possible with the categorical state and federal programs. Rehabilitation target areas have included Roseland, El Verano, South Wright Road, the Blackwell Tract, Windsor and the Russian River area. This program provides for the continued origination and administration of rehabilitation grants and loans over the 1984-90 program period.

Addresses Objective(s): 6B and 6C

Policy Reference(s): 6B4, 6B5 and 6B6

**Program 32: Design Review Manual**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. The County's existing design review process is intended, in part, to:

- prevent community deterioration and encourage the preservation and enhancement of property values and the visual character of communities; and to
- encourage development in harmony with the desired character of unincorporated areas and communities in conformance with adopted community design principles, the County general plan and specific plans.

This program consists of preparation and adoption of a manual describing design review procedures and requirements. The manual will enable residential developers to incorporate desired features into project plans early in the development process, reducing plan processing delays. To the extent that the program shortens construction periods, it should reduce construction financing costs, thereby lowering housing sales prices and rents.

Addresses Objective(s): 4A and 6A

Program Reference(s): 4A2 and 6A3

**Program 33: Solar Access Ordinance**

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Program Description. As discussed in Subsection 6.2.1, state law allows the county to adopt an ordinance providing for the dedication of solar access easements as a condition of approval of subdivision maps. This program will result in the preparation of a solar access ordinance as authorized by state law.

Addresses Objective(s): 6A

Policy Reference(s): 6A2







OPEN SPACE ELEMENT  
PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT







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PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

**Sonoma County General Plan  
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

**Prepared for Public Hearings  
Sonoma County Planning Commission**

**December 4, 1986**

**Sonoma County Planning Department  
575 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, California 95401**





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NA - Not applicable; Maps are in the envelope at the end of the element.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE**

Sections 65560 through 65570 of the Government Code of the State of California outline the requirements for open-space elements. The law recognizes that open-space land is a limited and valuable resource which must be preserved wherever possible for promotion of the general welfare of residents. Open space, defined as any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use, includes lands 1) for the preservation of natural resources, 2) for the managed production of resources, 3) for outdoor recreation, and 4) for public health and safety.

The purpose of the open-space element of the Sonoma County General Plan is to establish policies which will preserve the natural and scenic resources which contribute to the quality of life for the county's residents and to maintenance of its tourism economy. The intent of the element is to provide clear guidelines for decision-making bodies when they consider development permits for proposed projects located in designated open space areas. Under state law, both private and public projects must be consistent with and conform to an adopted open space plan. The open space element provides the standards for making the necessary consistency findings. The element also incorporates an implementation program as required by state law.

### **1.2 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS**

The Open Space Element addresses many issues which are also covered by the Public Safety, Agricultural Resources and Resource Conservation Elements and has been closely coordinated with these elements to ensure internal consistency. The Resource Conservation and Agricultural Resources Elements emphasize the conservation and management of resources which have economic value as commodities, while the Open Space Element focuses on the preservation of natural resource values which are frequently external to market allocation or the pricing system. Similarly, the Safety Element identifies land areas subject to various natural hazards and includes policies for the protection of the public, while the Open Space Element establishes policies to maintain hazardous areas as open lands. The Public Facilities Element contains an analysis of parkland needs and an implementation program to meet these needs. The Land-use Element maps and text are designed to reinforce the policies of the Open Space Element; mapped land-use categories, including permitted uses, densities and intensities, are expressed in a manner which will contribute to the preservation of open space lands.

### **1.3 SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION**

The Open Space Element has three major components: 1) a policy framework for the preservation of open space lands and 2) an open space plan map for each of the nine sub-county planning regions identifying land areas subject to the



Figure OS-1

# OPEN SPACE PLAN CONCEPTS

LEGAL  
REQUIREMENT

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT

MAPPED DESIGNATION/  
OTHER POLICIES

Open Space for  
PRESERVATION OF  
NATURAL  
RESOURCES

- Land-Use Element
- Resource Conservation Element
- Open Space Element

- Natural Resource Conservation Areas
- Other Policies
- Groundwater Recharge Areas
- Rare or Endangered Species
- Other Policies
- Biotic Resource Conservation Areas
- Protected Natural Riparian Areas
- Modified Natural Riparian Areas
- Other Policies

Open Space for  
MANAGED  
PRODUCTION  
OF RESOURCES

- Land-Use Element
- Resource Conservation Element
- Agricultural Resources Element

- Agricultural Use Categories (3)
- Timberland Areas
- Geothermal and Mineral Resource Areas
- Groundwater Availability Classifications
- Other Policies: Soil, Water, Fishery, Geothermal, Mineral Resources
- Other Policies: Agricultural Production Areas

Open Space for  
OUTDOOR  
RECREATION

- Public Facilities Element
- Open Space Element
- Land-Use Element

- Public Parks
- Other Policies: Parklands
- Parks
- Trails: Equestrian, Hiking, Waterways
- Bikeways
- Scenic Resource Areas: Community Separators, Scenic Landscape Units, Scenic Highways
- Other Policies: Historic and Cultural Resources
- Other Policies:

Open Space for  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
& SAFETY

- Safety Element
- Land-Use Element
- Open Space Element

- Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones
- Other Potentially Active Fault Zones
- Other Seismic Hazard Areas
- Areas with Slope Instability
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Wildland Fire Hazard Areas
- Other Policies
- Other Policies
- Other Policies

various policies, and 3) an action program identifying and describing the measures that have been selected to implement the open space policies. The policy framework is organized as six broad groupings of open space classifications and comprises statements of the policies applicable to the land areas designated within each category. The six groups of open space designations are:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| - scenic resource areas  | - areas subject to physical hazards       |
| - natural resource areas | - outdoor recreation areas                |
| - managed resource areas | - archeological/historical resource areas |

In some instances, the policy statements reference the plan maps in other elements to identify the land areas subject to open space policy. These include the Agricultural Resources Element for lands potentially suitable for agricultural production and the Public Safety Element for lands subject to safety hazards. The arrangement of open space policy within the various elements of the general plan is illustrated in Figure OS-1.

Designations on the open space plan maps are for policy and planning purposes only and shall not be construed as conferring a right of public access at the present time or as a basis for establishing public access rights through privately-owned lands in the future -- except in those instances where this intent is directly expressed in this element.

## **2.0 SCENIC RESOURCE AREAS**

The highly-valued qualities of Sonoma County to a large degree result from the attractiveness and diversity of its landscape. Maintenance of separate identities for the various communities, protection of scenic backdrops, and the preservation of views from rural roadways are important public purposes which contribute to the conservation of these scenic landscapes. The scenic resources component of the open space policy addresses this need through three open space categories which are applied to particular land areas: community separators, scenic landscape units, and scenic highway corridors. Figure OS-2 is a schematic representation of designated scenic resource areas; more precise locations of areas subject to these policies are indicated on the open space plan maps for the nine sub-county regions (Figures OS-5a through 5i),

## **2.1 POLICY FOR "COMMUNITY SEPARATOR" AREAS**

**Introduction:** One of the characteristics distinguishing Sonoma County from many suburban parts of the San Francisco Bay Area is accessibility to a rural landscape within a few minutes drive from any urban location. A related characteristic is the continued existence of separate, identifiable cities and communities rather than their boundaries being blurred by continuous urban development. Section 2.1.5 of the Land-use Element establishes a general policy for the maintenance of community separator open space areas so as to



maintain community identities. Some land areas would have to remain open or retain a rural character in order to avoid corridor-style urbanization and maintain distinct community edges. Such land is essentially a special type scenic border -- a "green belt" or community separator. These lands may not necessarily be highly scenic in their own right, but provide visual access to a backdrop that would not occur if the area were developed, and allow a sense of visual relief from dense urbanization.

Seven areas in the Highway 101 and Highway 12 corridors have been identified as desirable for community separator open space. Additionally these areas are among those most likely to experience economic pressures for urban or rural development. The seven areas are:

- 1) Petaluma/Novato. Approximately 1200 acres along the Highway 101 corridor between Petaluma and the Marin County line are defined as community separator to maintain open space between Petaluma and Novato. While the area is predominantly agricultural, some isolated commercial development exists adjacent to the freeway. Dominant landscape features include rolling hillsides with oak trees and scattered farms located along the valley floor. Additional commercial development along the corridor would erode this rural atmosphere.
- 2) Meacham Hill. The Meacham Hill separator lies between the cities of Petaluma, Penngrove and Rohnert Park/Cotati. Three major roadways, U.S. 101, Old Redwood Highway, and Stony Point Road traverse the area. From the top of the grade of Highway 101, the traveler overlooks Liberty Valley, one of the outstanding views in the county. Meacham hill is physically constrained for development and visually exposed with little woodland vegetation. Some rural residential lots south of Cotati and west of Highway 101 were created in the early 1970's. Development on these lots would be intrusive unless properly sited and screened. About 3360 acres have been designated within this separator; approximately 600 acres were under open space easements as of 1986.
- 3) North Rohnert Park. Approximately 1700 acres between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa are designated as community separator to retain an open space break between these cities. Four major roadways, Stony Point Road, U.S. 101, Snyder Lane, and Petaluma Hill road provide access through this area. Large parcels along Stony Point Road and Petaluma Hill Road create relief from the urban area and provide views of fields and the hills. While rural development along the Highway 101 corridor tends to limit the visual separation between the two cities, views are still possible from U.S. 101 across the flat agricultural plain to the Merced Hills on the west and Sonoma Mountains on the east. Development along this corridor would block these views and create a more intense urban form. Planting with native species should be used to screen any new structures and existing vegetation should be preserved.

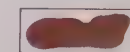


# SCHEMATIC MAP OF DESIGNATED SCENIC RESOURCE AREAS

## OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Open Space Element text expresses policies which are applicable to the following designated scenic resource areas:

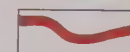
Community Separator Areas



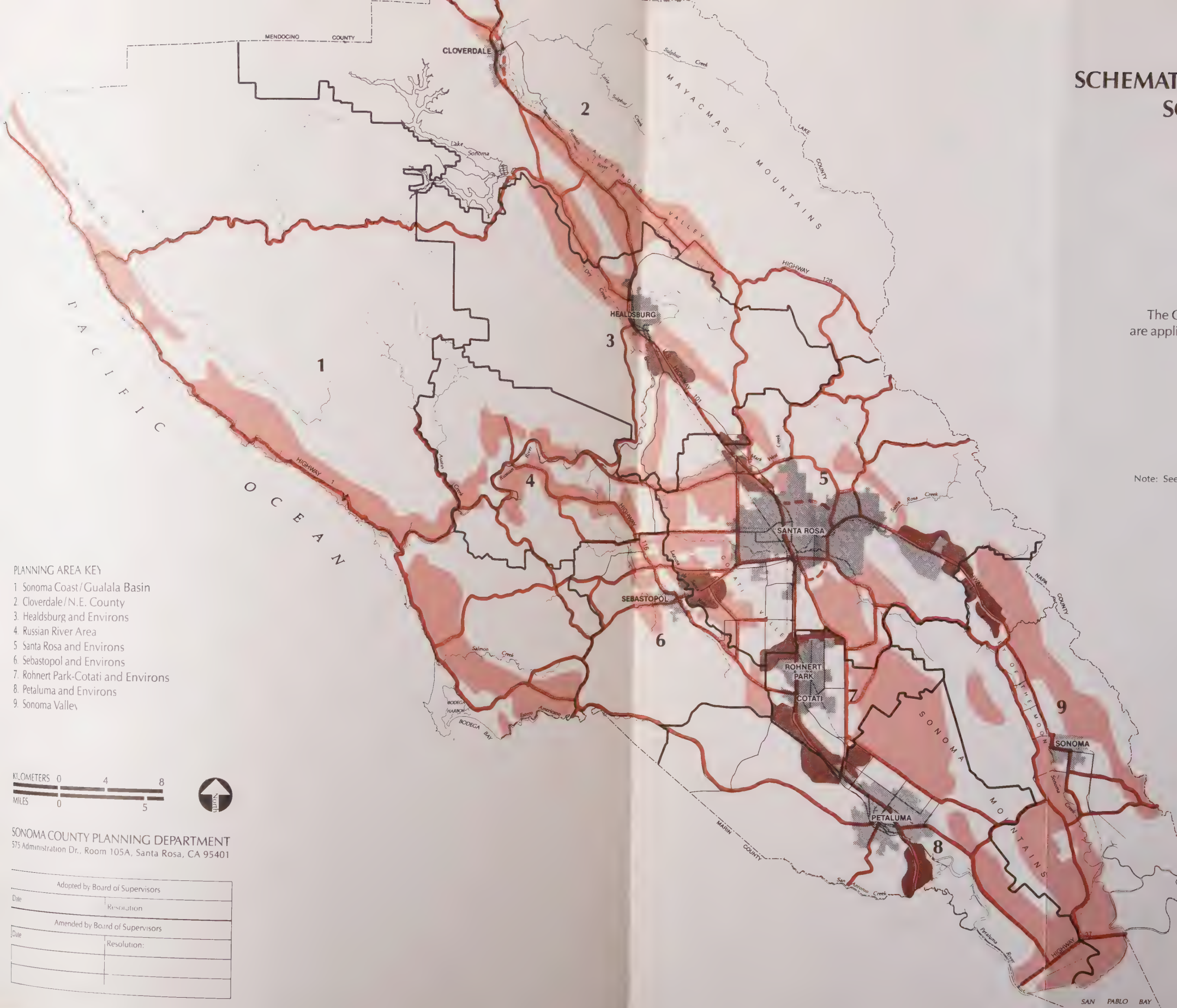
Scenic Landscape Units



Scenic Highway Corridors



Note: See Figures OS-5a through OS-5i for precise mapping of areas within each planning region subject to these policies.



### PLANNING AREA KEY

- 1 Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
- 2 Cloverdale/N.E. County
- 3 Healdsburg and Environs
- 4 Russian River Area
- 5 Santa Rosa and Environs
- 6 Sebastopol and Environs
- 7 Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
- 8 Petaluma and Environs
- 9 Sonoma Valley

KILOMETERS 0 4 8  
MILES 0 5



SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
575 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution



- 4) Santa Rosa / Sebastopol. While some "strip development" exists along the Highway 12 corridor between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol, scenic views of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and oak studded pastures are available. Mt. St. Helena presents a scenic backdrop for drivers going eastward from Sebastopol to Santa Rosa. Approximately 1400 acres are designated as open space to maintain this visual separation between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol. Retention of the existing oak woodlands and riparian vegetation is also critical to the scenic value of this area.
- 5) North Sonoma Valley. Highway 12 through the Sonoma Valley is a designated scenic corridor. While Oakmont creates an urban extension south of Highway 12, to the north Mt. Hood can be viewed across open fields and vineyards. Stone walls, specimen oak trees, and groves of trees also contribute to this rural setting. About 1000 acres are located in the area which would be beneficial to retain as open space between Santa Rosa and Kenwood. Another 1700 acres between Kenwood and Glen Ellen are designated within this separator.
- 6) South Windsor. This separator provides an open space break along the Highway 101 and Old Redwood Highway corridors between Santa Rosa, Larkfield-Wikiup, and Windsor. The traveler on these roadways progresses from an urban situation into a rural environment as the northern limits of Santa Rosa are crossed. Significant views are still available to the west across fields and vineyards to the Mendocino Highlands and to the east over the Mark West Springs Hills to Mt. St. Helena. However, as Windsor and Larkfield continue to develop into larger communities, this rural atmosphere is in danger of eroding. Approximately 2000 acres remain within the separator and about 90 acres were under scenic easements as of 1986.
- 7) Windsor / Healdsburg. Approximately 1200 acres along the Highway 101 corridor would be beneficial as open space to prevent the community of Windsor and the city of Healdsburg from merging. Views to the west encompass rolling hills which merge with the Mendocino Highlands. Buildout of the Limerick Lane subdivision located in the rolling hills to the east of the freeway could create a residential intrusion unless development is screened.

**Issues:** Lands within designated separators are frequently subject to economic pressure for development. Owners of properties located adjacent to urban service areas and along major transportation corridors often have development expectations because of the proximity of these lands to urban development and their accessibility. Many of these property owners have expressed concern that open space policies may constrain their property values. Past County policy in these areas has varied. In the Larkfield-Wikiup community, development rights have been conveyed to a portion of some sites in return for the placement of open space easements on the remainder of the property. This



approach was also utilized in Windsor to provide permanent open space along the southern boundary of the community. Elsewhere, development projects have been approved on individual parcels. A set of uniform standards has not been adopted to define the types and intensity of uses which are permissible on lands designated as community separator. As the county has continued to urbanize, some residents and cities have supported the concept of designating additional community separators along Highway 12 and Highway 101.

**Directive:** Open space separation between cities and/or other urban communities is an important aspect of the general welfare and quality of life for many of Sonoma County's residents; the Open Space Element shall establish policies which will retain these lands in an open manner with very low intensity of development.

**Goal OS-1:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that the visual identities of its communities be preserved through the maintenance of open space areas between cities and/or communities.

**Objective OS-1.1:** It is the objective of Sonoma County that important open space areas between the cities of Petaluma and Novato, Petaluma and Rohnert Park-Cotati, Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa and Windsor, Windsor and Healdsburg, Santa Rosa and Kenwood/Glen Ellen, and Santa Rosa and Sebastopol be identified and preserved.

**Objective OS-1.2:** It is the objective of Sonoma County that community separator lands retain a rural character, not be developed with commercial or industrial uses, and not be annexed into cities or included within LAFCo "spheres of influence" for cities or those special districts which provide water and/or sewer services.

**Objective OS-1.3:** It is the objective of Sonoma County to preserve existing specimen trees and tree stands within community separator areas.

The County shall utilize the following policies in areas which are designated as community separators on the open space plan maps:

**OS-1a:** Permitted residential densities generally may not exceed one dwelling per 20 acres in community separators. In specific designated areas, a 10-acre density may be permissible where substantial parcelization has already occurred. This higher density shall not be applied to any additional separator areas. The land-use plan maps may designate a more restrictive density and may stipulate a minimum size for any new parcels.

**OS-1b:** The SR (Scenic Resource) combining zoning district shall be required for all lands located within a community separator area.

**OS-1c:** Within community separator areas, building permits for all new structures, except for agricultural buildings not intended to be open to the public, shall be subject to administrative design review. The following criteria shall be utilized to guide the assessment of all applicable proposals:

- 1) Structures shall be sited below ridgelines
- 2) Structures shall be sited out of public view and utilize natural landforms and vegetation for screening. If the entire site is open, a fire retardant native vegetative screen shall be planted and maintained.
- 3) Cuts and fills are discouraged and driveways shall be hidden from public view where possible.
- 4) Underground utilities shall be required.

**OS-1d:** In approving subdivisions within a designated community separator area, the following findings shall be required to be made by the appropriate decision-making body pursuant to Section 66473.5 of the Government Code as a basis for determining consistency with the open space element:

- 1) Building envelopes have been established which are located below any ridgelines and utilize existing vegetation, where available, or new plantings as screening.
- 2) On developments located in a valley floor, building envelopes have been established based on a visual analysis. Future residences shall be located in the least visually sensitive portion of the lot and/or adjacent to any existing development and shall utilize existing vegetation or new plantings as screening.
- 4) Cuts and fill are minimized and roadways and driveways are hidden from public view where possible.
- 5) Clustering is utilized where it will minimize visual impacts unless prohibited by the policies of an agricultural land-use designation.
- 6) The subdivision has been designed with building sites and roadways located to preserve existing tree stands and oak trees.
- 7) A scenic easement in perpetuity will be dedicated to the county, its designee, or a designee specified by the property owner and approved by the County. The language of the easement shall specify the maximum number of residential building sites or lots which may be permitted subject to applicable provisions of the general plan.

New agricultural structures located on parcels which contained an existing farm building as of 1986 shall be exempt from any building envelope requirements imposed on subdivisions pursuant to this policy.

**OS-1e:** The County and its various agencies shall not be authorized to submit proposals to LAFCo for spheres-of-influence or amendment thereto for County Service Areas (CSA's) or other county-controlled special districts until written findings have been made by the Planning Director or the Planning Commission that such proposals do not include any lands within designated community separators or scenic landscape units.

**OS-1f:** The Planning director shall submit a report to LAFCo when it is considering a proposal to adopt or amend a sphere-of-influence for a city or independent special district; the report shall indicate whether the proposal is in conformity with the community separator areas as delineated on the open space plan maps.

**OS-1g:** The land-use plan and zoning are intended to provide the primary means of implementing community separator policies. As a secondary tool, the county shall initiate a study of designated community separator areas to identify critical or high priority parcels and conduct a survey of vacant parcels and an analysis of the potential to consolidate existing undeveloped parcels. The study shall also review funding alternatives and programs such as purchase of development rights programs to provide for the protection of critical parcels.

**OS-1h:** The County shall prepare and place on the ballot for the voters' consideration a measure which would establish an Open Space District for the purpose of acquiring and administering open space lands. The measure, or a subsequent measure, shall include an appropriate funding source, such as a special tax, to finance acquisition of partial or in-fee interests, including purchase of development rights, in open space lands. Eligible open space lands include: community separator areas, scenic landscape units, biotic resource areas, and trails.

## 2.2 POLICY FOR SCENIC LANDSCAPE UNITS

**Introduction :** Certain aspects of the county's landscape such as coastal bluffs, vineyards, San Pablo Bay, and the Laguna de Santa Rosa are of special importance to Sonoma County. Preservation of these scenic values is important to the quality of life of Sonoma County's residents and to its economy, since tourism and the sale of agricultural products are closely tied to the county's image as a scenic area. Other features of the landscape, such as the



Mayacamas and Sonoma Mountains provide a scenic backdrop to communities. As the county urbanizes, maintenance of the openness of these areas would provide important visual relief from urban densities. Since any modification would usually be readily apparent to a large number of people, these landscapes have little capacity to absorb very much development without incurring a significant visual impact.

Major scenic landscape units have been identified as follows:

- 1) The Coast: - The Sonoma coast is a scenic resource vital to the uniqueness of Sonoma County's varied landscape, and is also of value on a regional and statewide scale. It is related to Highway 1, and encompasses the land which is visually under marine influence. The inland boundary usually follows the ridge visually bordering the coast -- although this is not always the drainage divide. Three basic types of landscapes are included -- the relatively intensely used flat terraces south of the Russian River, the more hilly and lightly used terraces from Fort Ross northward, and the cliffs and landslide area between.
- 2) Oat Valley: - Oat Valley and the hillsides above it provide the scenic northern entrance to the county near Cloverdale.
- 3) Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys - Protection of these agricultural valleys' scenic beauty is not only important from an aesthetic standpoint, but also from an economic one as wine marketing is closely tied to the areas' scenic image. The hills along Highway 101 and above the valley floor are particularly sensitive and are included as scenic resources.
- 4) Hills between Healdsburg and Santa Rosa - These hills provide a scenic backdrop to the Santa Rosa Plain. North of Windsor the area extends into the plain and adjoins the low, rolling hills which form part of the Healdsburg-Windsor Community Separator.
- 5) Eastside Road - This area of rolling hills is an important transition between the community of Windsor and the rich agricultural and mineral resource areas of the Russian River Valley.
- 6) River Road - This area provides a variety of landscapes, including a scenic overview of valleys planted in vineyards, orchard covered hillsides, and redwood groves adjacent to the Russian River.
- 7) Laguna de Santa Rosa - This area extends from Windsor Creek on the north to the Meacham Hill Community Separator on the South. It consists primarily of the scenic lowlands and floodplain around the Laguna de Santa Rosa marsh but also includes hills between Sebastopol and Forestville and adjacent to Meacham Hill. The area clearly defines the eastern extent of Sebastopol and its associated rural residential development.

- 8) Bennett Valley - Bennett Mountain forms a scenic backdrop from Bennett Valley Road. This area defines Santa Rosa's southeastern boundary and also abuts Annadel State Park.
- 9) Highway 116 - The view corridor along Highway 116 contains unique views of orchards, redwood groves, and the Russian River. The boundary of the scenic landscape unit coincides with the boundary adopted for the state scenic corridor study. This area also defines the community boundaries of Forestville, Guerneville, and Monte Rio and their adjacent rural residential development.
- 10) Atascadero Creek - This area consists primarily of the lowlands and floodplains along Atascadero Creek but also includes the hills along Occidental Road. The area defines the western boundary of Sebastopol and its adjacent rural residential development, forms a separator between Sebastopol and Graton and creates a visual connection to the Laguna de Santa Rosa.
- 11) Coleman Valley - The Coleman Valley Road area contains unique views of forests, canyons, grazing lands, and the ocean.
- 12) Sonoma Mountains - These sharply dissected hills with grass uplands, some areas of heavy vegetation, and rock outcroppings are highly valuable scenic lands, clearly defining the eastern edge of the Santa Rosa plain between Petaluma and Sonoma. They provide an important backdrop to the urban valley.
- 13) Hills South of Petaluma - The open grassy hillsides and ridgelines of the area are extremely sensitive. Located right at the Marin County border, this area is a gateway of major importance to the county.
- 14) Sonoma Valley - Included in this area are the Sonoma-Napa Mountains which provide a backdrop to the valley and agricultural areas bordering the valley. These areas define the boundaries of the rural communities and are very sensitive because of their small size and the unobstructed view of them from roads and adjoining urban areas.
- 15) South Sonoma Mountains - These hillsides are an important and sensitive component of the South County landscape. They combine a simple landform, minimal vegetation, and a clear widespread viewing area. Pasture lands along the Highway 37 corridor are included to preserve views of the San Pablo Bay.

**Goal OS-2: It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma that the important scenic landscape units identified above be delineated on the open space plan map and that such lands be maintained in an open, natural character.**

**Objective OS-2.1:** It is the County's intent that lands located within designated scenic landscape units retain a rural, scenic character with very low intensities of development and that they not be included within spheres-of-influence for cities or service districts which provide development-related services such as water and/or sewerage.

The following policies shall be applicable to areas which are within a designated scenic landscape unit:

- OS-2a:** Commercial or industrial land-uses, other than Recreation/Visitor Serving Commercial and Resource-Related Commercial/Industrial uses, shall not be permitted in designated scenic landscape units.
- OS-2b:** Permitted residential densities shall not exceed one dwelling unit per 10 acres in any area designated as a scenic landscape unit. The land-use plan map may designate a more restrictive land-use density and may stipulate a minimum size for any new parcels.
- OS-2c:** The SR (Scenic Resource) combining zoning district shall be required for any lands located within scenic landscape units areas designated on the open space plan maps.
- OS-2d:** In approving subdivisions within a designated scenic landscape unit, the following findings shall be required to be made by the appropriate decision-making body pursuant to Section 66473.5 of the Government code as a basis for determining consistency with the open space element:
- 1) Building envelopes have been established on hillside developments to locate building sites below ridge lines and behind existing vegetation.
  - 2) For developments located in a valley floor, building envelopes have been established which locate future residences in the least visually sensitive portion of the lot and/or adjacent to any existing development and shall utilize existing vegetation and new plantings as screening.
  - 3) Cuts and fill are minimized and roadways and driveways are hidden from public view where feasible.
  - 4) Clustering is utilized where it will minimize visual impacts, unless it is prohibited by the policies and minimum parcel sizes required by an agricultural land-use designation.
  - 5) A 20-year scenic easement will be dedicated to the county or its designee on the undeveloped portion of the parcel. The language of the easement shall specify the maximum number of residential building sites or lots which may be permitted subject to applicable provisions of the general plan.



Agricultural structures not intended to be open to the public shall be exempt from the siting restrictions of building envelopes required for other structures in "scenic landscape unit" areas.

**OS-2e:** The County and its various agencies shall not be authorized to submit proposals to LAFCo for spheres-of-influence or amendment thereto for County Service Areas (CSA's) or other county controlled special districts until written findings have been made by the Planning Director or the Planning Commission that such proposals do not include any lands within designated "scenic landscape unit" areas.

**OS-2f:** The Planning Director shall submit a report to LAFCo when it is considering a proposal to adopt or amend a sphere-of-influence for a city or independent special district which provides urban services; the report shall indicate whether the proposal is in conformity with the "scenic landscape unit" areas as delineated on the open space plan maps.

**OS-2g:** If the county establishes a purchase of development rights program, lands located within designated scenic landscape units shall be eligible for acquisition of protective easements.

## **2.3 POLICY FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDORS**

**Introduction :** The variety and beauty of Sonoma County's landscapes as viewed from rural roadways are highly valued by its residents. Motorists can travel from urban centers into orchard and forest covered hills, rolling dairy lands, and scenic valleys planted in vineyards. These landscapes are a resource that must be maintained if the character of the county is to be preserved. Retention of the appeal of these roadways is an important feature of the living environment for local residents, but also contributes to the county's appeal and image for visitors and to its tourism economy.

The following roadways within the nine sub-county regions have been designated as scenic corridors:

### **Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin**

Highway 1, Highway 116, Stewarts Point-Skaggs Springs Road, Coleman Valley Road, Bodega Highway, Jonive Road.

### **Cloverdale-Northeast County**

Highway 101, Highway 128, Dutcher Creek Road, Franz Valley Road, Dry Creek Road

### **Healdsburg and Environs**

Highway 101, Chalk Hill Road, Dry Creek Road, Faught Road, Westside Road, Porter Creek road, Franz Valley Road.

**Russian River Area**

Highway 116, Westside Road, River Road, Green Valley Road, Armstrong Woods Road, Cazadero Highway, Bohemian Highway.

**Santa Rosa and Environs**

Highway 101, Mark West Springs Road, Porter Creek Road, Calistoga Road, St. Helena Road, Riebli Road, Rincon Avenue, Baird Road (portion), Highway 12, River Road, Guerneville Road, Occidental Road, Llano Road, Todd Road, Bennett Valley Road, Pressley Road, Sonoma Mountain Road.

**Sebastopol and Environs**

Highway 1, Occidental Road, Bodega Highway, Valley Ford-Freestone Road, Highway 116.

**Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs**

Highway 116, Highway 101, Petaluma Hill Road, Old Redwood Highway (portion).

**Petaluma and Environs**

U.S. Highway 101, Bodega Avenue, Petaluma-Valley Ford Road, Adobe Road, D Street, Highway 116, Stage Gulch Road, Lakeville Road, Highway 37.

**Sonoma Valley**

Highway 12, Arnold Drive, Bennett Valley Road, Napa Road, Highway 121, Highway 37, Highway 116.

**Goal OS-3:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma to identify and preserve roadside landscapes which have a high visual quality and to preserve these attributes for their contribution to the living environment of local residents and to the county's tourism economy.

**Objective OS-3.1:** It is the objective of the County that scenic corridors be designated along roadways which: traverse areas of high visual quality; are visual links connecting and providing access to major recreation areas; provide access to historic areas; and serve as scenic entranceways to cities.

**Objective OS-3.2:** It is the objective of the County that future land-uses and development be compatible with the preservation of scenic values along designated scenic highway corridors.

**Objective OS-3.3:** It is the County's objective that roadway construction activities on designated scenic corridors be compatible with the preservation of scenic values.

The County shall utilize the following policies related to scenic corridors:

- OS-3a:** Parcels adjacent to scenic corridors shall be rezoned to add the SR (Scenic Resource) combining zoning district to the base district.
- OS-3b:** Along rural scenic corridor routes, a building setback of 30 percent of the depth of the lot up to a maximum of 200 feet from the centerline of the road shall be required to preserve the rural, open character of the corridor. If development is proposed within the setback, a design review field inspection will be required to authorize exception based on screening by existing vegetation and topography. Where scenic corridors traverse agricultural land uses which have existing farm structures located within the setback, new farm structures which are not intended to be open to the public shall be exempt from the setback requirement. Existing farm structures within the setback area may be expanded or improved.
- OS-3c:** Within urban areas along the Highway 101 Scenic Corridor, a minimum building setback of 20 feet shall be required from the property line. The 20 feet shall be reserved for landscaping. Freeway-oriented signs shall not be permitted. Specific plans applicable to the subject urban areas shall incorporate design criteria and may establish more-restrictive setbacks.
- OS-3d:** Within the boundaries of urban areas, a scenic corridor designation shall require that storage areas be screened, existing trees be retained or replaced with specimen trees, and all discretionary permits be subject to design review. Specific plans applicable to urban areas shall incorporate design criteria for scenic highway corridors.
- OS-3e:** Bohemian Highway between Occidental and Freestone and Bodega Highway between Bodega and Freestone are designated as scenic highway corridors because of their historic as well as scenic resources. Building permit applications for structures along the corridor shall be referred to the Sonoma County Landmarks Commission for review and approval.
- OS-3f:** New billboard signs shall not be permitted along designated scenic highway corridors and existing billboards shall be required to be eliminated because they detract from the landscape. As a condition of approval for discretionary permits existing billboards shall be amortized subject to the limitation of Division 3 of the Business and Professional Code related to on-premises advertising.



**OS-3g:** The location and placement of any satellite dish which requires a building permit shall be regulated within scenic corridor setbacks so that it is not visible from the roadway.

**OS-3h:** An analysis of the impact on the view from the road and on the scenic quality of the road itself shall be included in any environmental review process undertaken to evaluate major road improvement projects which would be located in scenic highway corridors, including realignment of existing roads, road widening projects, and the alignment of new roads.

**OS-3i:** Public works projects, including but not limited to roadway improvements and drainage projects, shall be designed to minimize tree damage and removal along scenic corridors. Where trees must be removed to accommodate essential road and other public works improvements, they shall be replaced by suitable specimen trees. Reseeding and revegetation programs shall be required following earthmoving operations and road cuts.

**OS-3j:** The County shall request official state scenic highway designations for Highways 1 and 37. Upon the request of local residents, the County may pursue similar state status for other scenic highway corridors.

### 3.0 NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Sonoma County is rich in plant and animal habitats which form an important component of the landscape and warrant protection. The natural resources component of the Open Space Element is complementary to the Resource Conservation Element. Primary components which are mapped on the open space plan maps are biotic resource areas and riparian corridors. Figure OS-3 is a schematic representation of designated natural resource protection areas; precise locations of some areas subject to these policies are indicated on the open space plan maps for the nine sub-county regions (Figures OS-51 through 5i).

### 3.1 POLICY FOR BIOTIC RESOURCE AREAS

**Introduction:** While the woodland, chaparral, grassland, and wetland areas of Sonoma County are biotic communities which both provide a wildlife habitat and contribute to the quality of life in Sonoma County, certain of these areas need special protection. They are highly sensitive to any modification and could be adversely affected by development.

Major biotic resource areas which have been identified are:

- 1) Wetlands and Marshes - These are identified as critical habitats and include tidal salt marshes and estuaries, fresh water marshes, and vernal pools. Wetlands provide a habitat for many animal and plant species and serve as the base of a food chain which supports many types of fish, wildfowl and other birds and mammals. In addition, these areas are important as stopping points for many migratory species, especially birds. Reduction in these lands not only affects the survival of those species, but also decreases sport hunting, fishing, and recreational opportunities. Some of these lands are under federal or state ownership.
- 2) Unique Natural Areas - Remnants of the native bunchgrass communities and oak savannas represent the original characteristic vegetation of Sonoma County. They provide both an aesthetic amenity and a food resource for wildlife species. Sargent Cypress Forests, Pygmy Forests, and Coastal Dunes contain rare and endangered species, are highly susceptible to damage and are difficult to reestablish. Lands held as preserves by the Sonoma County Land Trust, Audubon Society and the Academy of Science are also included within this designation.
- 3) Areas Containing Rare or Endangered Species - Plants and animals which are considered to be in danger of extinction due to the loss or alteration of habitat are protected by state and federal law.

**Goal OS-4:** It is a goal of Sonoma County to identify those land areas which contain important biotic resources and to assure that the quality of those natural resources is maintained and not adversely affected by development activities.

**Objective OS-4.1:** It is the County's objective to designate wetlands, marshes, unique natural areas, and habitats containing rare and endangered species on the open space plan maps and maintain low intensity land-uses in these areas.

**Objective OS-4.2:** It is the County's objective that any development that is authorized by the land-use plan maps on lands designated as biotic resource areas on the open space plan maps be accomplished in a manner which protects the resource.

The County shall use the following policies related to areas designated as biotic resources on the open space plan maps:

**OS-4a:** The zoning ordinance shall be amended to include a Biotic Resources Protection combining district.



# SCHEMATIC MAP OF DESIGNATED NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AREAS

## OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Open Space Element text expresses policies which are applicable to the following designated natural resource areas:

### Biotic Resource Conservation Areas

- Streamside Conservation Areas
- Protected Natural Stream
- Modified Natural Stream

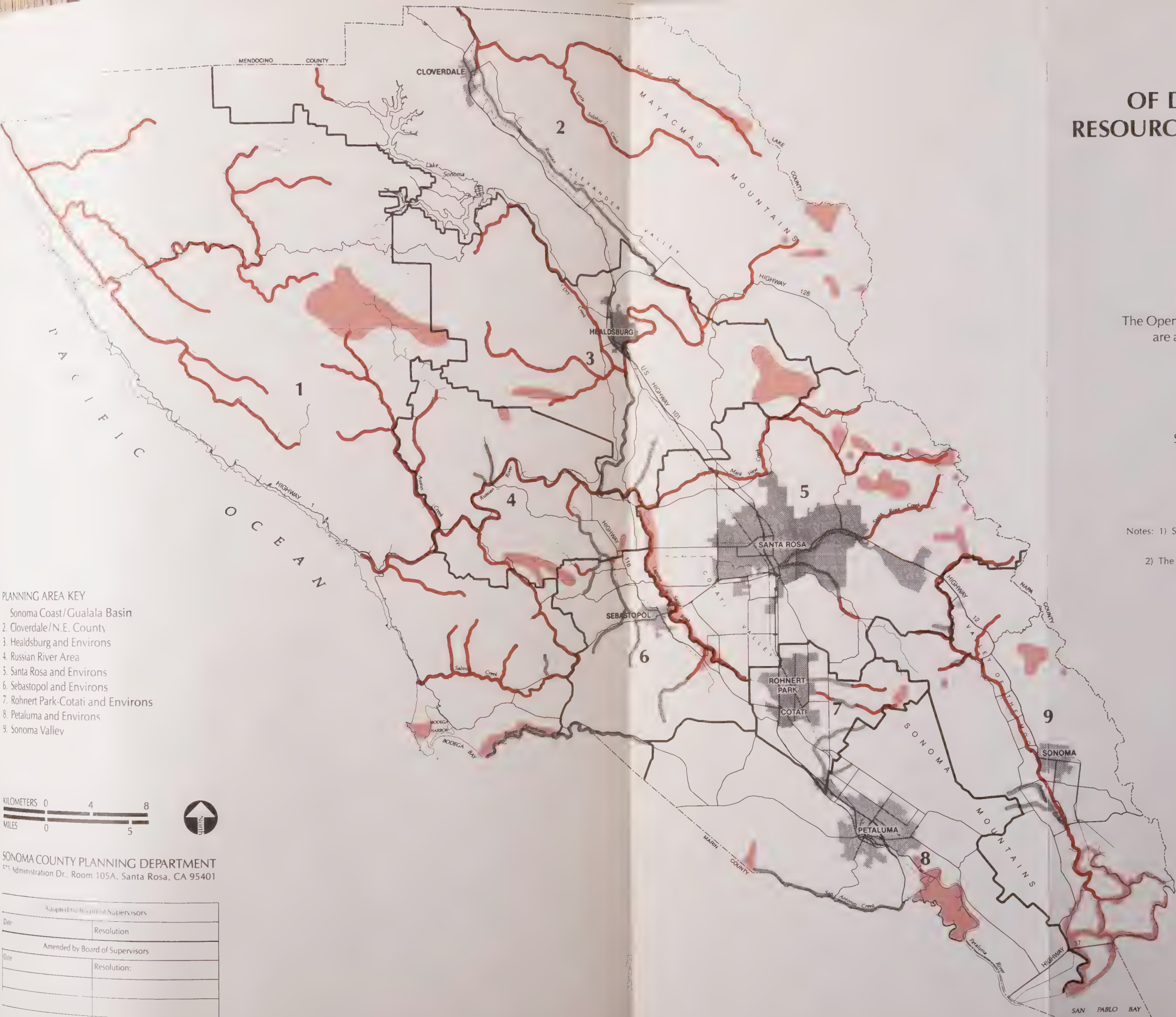
Notes: 1) See Figures OS-5a through OS-5i for precise mapping of areas within each planning region subject to these policies.  
2) The Open Space Element text may express policies for additional natural resource protection areas which are not designated on the maps.

- PLANNING AREA KEY
- 1. Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
  - 2. Cloverdale/N.E. County
  - 3. Healdsburg and Environs
  - 4. Russian River Area
  - 5. Santa Rosa and Environs
  - 6. Sebastopol and Environs
  - 7. Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
  - 8. Petaluma and Environs
  - 9. Sonoma Valley



SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
115 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date:	Resolution:
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date:	Resolution:







**OS-4b:** BR (Biotic Resources) combining district zoning shall be required for any lands designated as a biotic resource area on the open space plan maps.

**OS-4c:** Prior to the approval of a discretionary planning permit on parcels designated as biotic resource areas, a biotic resources assessment which evaluates the project's impacts on the resource and develops mitigation measures shall be required to be prepared; building envelopes which avoid those portions of a parcel containing biotic resources shall be required for all tentative maps on these sites.

**OS-4d:** If the County establishes a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, biotic resource areas designated on the open space plan maps shall be eligible for acquisition.

**OS-4e:** A minimum setback of 50 feet for structures shall be required from the edge of any marsh or wetlands designated on the open space plan maps. Expansions or other modifications of farm structures existing as of 1986 are exempt from the setback. A waiver of this standard may be granted by the Planning Director for a proposed project if a biotic resources report has been prepared which evaluates the projects impacts on the biotic resource area, lists appropriate mitigation measures, and evaluates alternative sitings and if the project conforms to one of the following criteria:

- a) The structure is intended for agricultural uses, will not be open to the public, is adjacent to agricultural structure existing as of 1986, and is in a location that is necessary for effective farm management and operation.
- b) Application of the setback would render the parcel unbuildable.

### **3.2 POLICY FOR PROTECTED NATURAL RIPARIAN CORRIDORS**

**Issues:** Areas along streams that have been retained in or returned to native vegetation are referred to as riparian corridors. Typical trees include willows, poplar, Oregon ash, and valley oak while the undercover contains vines, herbs, shrubs and ferns such as blackberries, poison oak, and wild grapes. This zone of riparian plants creates a micro-climate which is cool and humid in summer and protected from cold in winter. The streamside environment offers diverse insect and plant food, shelter, nesting sites and materials and provides a water source for birds, fish, and mammals. The plant cover regulates the instream water temperature and provides a nursery habitat for trout, salmon, and steelhead.

Riparian vegetation contributes to both water quantity and quality. Plants and trees serve as filters for sediment, pesticides, and fertilizers. They stabilize banks and keep soils loose and permeable, allowing aquifers along streams to be recharged. Elimination of natural plant communities along streams can increase surface run-off, which in turn increases siltation into streams. As run-off increases, so does the speed of water in a stream. The combined effect of this cycle is a stream environment which is detrimental to fisheries. These environmental values, plus visual qualities, make riparian corridors an important component of the open space network.

Riparian areas can create conflicts with agricultural and urban uses. Overgrazing can remove vegetative cover. Lands along streams are often comprised of prime soils which are valued for their potential use as cropland. Riparian areas can harbor insect pests and plant diseases which may infect adjacent vineyards and orchards.

Riparian corridors are found along three basic types of streams: ephemeral streams drain only surface water runoff during the rainy season; intermittent streams drain surface water and discharge of high ground water levels, allowing flows into the drought season; and perennial streams drain surface water and have a permanent source of water from ground water discharge, allowing flows all year.

**Directive:** The Open Space Element shall establish policies which will conserve important areas of riparian vegetation along those streams which have not been substantially altered by urbanization, flood control projects, or agricultural uses.

**Goal OS-5:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma to preserve and protect relatively undisturbed streams and riparian areas as irreplaceable resources because of their values for wildlife habitat, water quality, erosion control, fisheries production, aesthetics, and recreation.

**Objective OS-5.1:** It is the objective of Sonoma County that perennial and intermittent streams outside of urban areas with significant undisturbed riparian vegetation be classified as "Protected Natural Riparian Corridors" on the open space maps; that they be preserved in their natural state; and that clearing of vegetation, grading, and construction activities be restricted.

The County shall employ the following policies for Protected Natural Riparian Corridors.

**OS-5a:** Streams with substantial riparian vegetation located in areas which are designated in the "Natural Resource Conservation", "Geothermal" and "Timberlands" categories and materially



unaltered streams with significant riparian vegetation located in other land-use categories shall be classified as "Protected Natural Riparian Corridors" on the open space plan maps.

**OS-5b:** A permanent streamside conservation area within which structures are prohibited shall be established along designated streams. The riparian corridor shall be a minimum of 100 feet from the top of the high bank (as defined by Sonoma County Water Agency criteria) and shall include all riparian vegetation and a buffer zone of 10 feet from the outside drip line of the riparian canopy. However, in no instance shall the corridor, inclusive of buffer zone, exceed 200 feet from the top of the high bank.

**OS-5c:** Within the streamside conservation area, construction of structures, roads and utility lines (except at crossings), and parking lots, are not allowed. A waiver of this standard may be granted by the Planning Director if a proposed project conforms to one of the following criteria:

- 1) Application of the corridor restriction would render the parcel unbuildable and building sites have been located to minimize vegetation removal; or
- 2) The structure is intended for agricultural uses, will not be open to the public, is adjacent to agricultural structures existing as of 1986, is in a location that is necessary for effective farm management and operation, and cannot reasonably be located outside of the corridor.

Prior to approval of any waiver request, a biotic resources assessment shall be prepared which evaluates the project's impacts on the riparian corridor, lists appropriate mitigation measures which will be undertaken to reduce adverse impacts to an acceptable level, and lists alternative sitings, if any, that would have a less significant impact on the corridor. In granting a waiver, less invasive sitings shall be required where practical. Further, mitigation measures shall be required as conditions of waiver.

The assessment shall not be required where the Planning Director finds that all proposed sites, construction activities, and incompatible uses are located outside of the existing riparian zone and will not substantially affect the part of the parcel within the riparian corridor.

**OS-5d:** The following activities are permissible uses in the streamside conservation area: grazing of livestock, summer dams, and stream maintenance where any necessary permits have been obtained from state or federal regulatory agencies.

**OS-5e:** The County shall prepare a Biotic Resources Zoning combining district which establishes protective regulations for "Protected Natural Riparian Corridors". The regulations of this zoning district shall:

- 1) Express standards and procedures to control the removal of vegetation within the streamside conservation area.
- 2) Identify permitted uses, including the activities listed in Policy OS-5d.
- 3) Identify enforcement measures.
- 4) Provide procedures for allowing vegetation removal when a pest outbreak is acknowledged by the Board of Supervisors and such clearing is part of an integrated management program administered by the Agricultural Commissioner.

**OS-5f:** County specific plans may identify and designate additional streams which shall be subject to the policies expressed in this section for "Protected Natural Riparian Corridors".

**OS-5g:** The Planning Department shall review all timber harvest plans adjacent to designated riparian corridors and request that tree harvesting not occur within the streamside conservation area as defined in policy OS-5b.

**OS-5h:** Reviews of public projects conducted under the authority of Section 65402 of the Government Code shall utilize the following criteria to determine consistency with the open space plan:

- 1) SCWA projects which include streambank modification are not in conformity with policy standards for "protected natural riparian corridors." Plans for vegetation removal for maintenance purposes shall be referred to the Department of Fish and Game for review.
- 2) Roadway and utility construction shall avoid riparian areas. For necessary stream crossings, vegetation removal shall be minimized.
- 3) All structures, parking lots, and storage areas shall meet the criteria established for private projects under policy OS-5c.
- 4) Grading, filling, or construction in conjunction with any permitted development shall not diminish or divert any stream flow or result in any increase in bank instability or erosion.

### 3.3 POLICY FOR MODIFIED NATURAL RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

**Issues:** Many streams within the county have valuable riparian areas but have been or may in the future be altered by urban or agricultural land uses and activities. The need to modify streambanks and vegetation for flood control, and for urban and agricultural activities must be balanced with the need to

retain natural vegetation which provides wildlife habitat and bank stabilization. Excessive vegetation removal can create water quality problems, add to flooding problems downstream, and degrade fish spawning areas. Excessive restrictions on stream or riparian area alterations could potentially create financial hardships for some farmers and developers.

**Directive:** The Open Space Element shall establish policy which will protect riparian vegetation and habitats along selected streams in an essentially natural state while permitting some modifications related to agricultural uses and activities, urban development and flood management.

**Goal OS-6:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma to provide protections for riparian corridors along selected streams which may have been modified by human activity in the past and that protective measures balance needs for agricultural production, urban development, and flood control with preservation of riparian values.

**Objective OS-6.1:** It is the objective of Sonoma County that perennial and intermittent streams which may be altered by future land uses be identified as "Modified Natural Riparian Corridors" on the open space plan maps and that development guidelines be provided which adequately protect their riparian resource values.

The County shall use the following policies in areas designated as "Modified Natural Riparian Corridors."

**OS-6a:** A "streamside management area" shall be established which comprises:

- 1) a <sup>maximum</sup> ~~minimum~~ of 100 feet measured outward from the top of the high bank in rural areas, or
- 2) a minimum of 50 feet from the top of the high bank or a minimum of 2.5 times the height of the bank plus 30 feet, whichever is greater, in urban service areas. The top of the high bank shall be as defined by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

**OS-6b:** Within the streamside management area, construction of structures, parking lots, roads and utility lines (except at crossings); dumping of refuse; storage of building materials, abandoned vehicles, and waste; and the confinement of animals, such as in feed lots, are not allowed. Waiver of this standard may be granted by the Planning Director if one or more of the following criteria apply:

- 1) Application of the policy standard would render the parcel unbuildable, and building sites have been located to minimize vegetation removal;



- 2) A biotic resources assessment has been prepared which evaluates the project's impacts on the riparian corridor and identifies mitigation measures which will be undertaken to reduce adverse impacts to an acceptable level;
- 3) All building sites and construction activities are located outside of the existing riparian zone; or
- 4) The structure is intended for agricultural uses, will not be open to the public, is adjacent to agricultural structures existing in 1986, and is in a location that is necessary for effective farm management and operation.

**OS-6c:** The following uses are permissible in the streamside management area: grazing of livestock and cultivation of crops, aggregate extraction subject to the policies of the Aggregate Resources Management Plan, road and utility crossings, dams approved by the local Resource Conservation District and Soil Conservation Service, summer dams, and stream maintenance where permits have been obtained from state and federal regulatory agencies.

**OS-6d:** On all permits requiring discretionary planning approval on parcels with a "Modified Natural Riparian Corridor" designation, the following findings shall be required in order to determine consistency with the Open Space Element:

- 1) The use is located outside the streamside management area or is a use permitted by Policy OS-6c.
- 2) The project has been designed so that grading, filling or construction shall not diminish stream flow or result in any increase in bank instability, erosion or sedimentation.

**OS-6e:** Creekside bikeways, trails, and parks shall be considered appropriate uses along those segments of creeks which are located within urban service areas as designated on the land-use plan maps.

**OS-6f:** Urban or rural residential subdivisions on parcels with designated "Modified Natural Riparian Corridors" shall be designed, wherever practicable, utilizing parallel streets, cul-de-sacs, looped street patterns or common open space which preserves public access to riparian areas. Private open space (patios, yards) shall be discouraged from abutting creeks in urban service areas.

**OS-6g:** Review of public projects conducted under the authority of Section 65402 of the government code shall utilize the following criteria to determine consistency with the open space plan:

- 1) SCWA flood control projects shall be designed to minimize vegetation removal. Acceptable project alternatives include the use of secondary channels, or modification of the bank followed by subsequent replanting with natural vegetation. Channelization or conduits do not conform to the policy intent for "modified natural riparian corridors."
- 2) Roadway and utility crossings shall be designed to minimize vegetation removal.
- 3) Grading, filling, or construction shall not result in any increase in erosion, bank instability or sedimentation.

#### **4.0 POLICY FOR MANAGED RESOURCE AREAS**

**Introduction:** Commercial production utilizing natural resources is important to Sonoma County's economy and to the preservation of its natural diversity. Agriculture, forestry, and geothermal production occupy considerable portions of the county's land area. Aggregate resources, while not land extensive, are also abundant with gravel operations located along the Russian River and hard rock quarries scattered throughout the county. Protection of water resources, including watersheds and aquifer recharge areas, is important so that an ample water supply is available for wildlife and agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Managed resources are primarily addressed in the Land-use, Agricultural Resources and Resource Conservation Elements. The Resource Conservation Element includes a detailed inventory of forest, agricultural, mineral, soil, and water resources and includes goals, objectives, and policies for their protection. The Land-use Element includes six agriculture and resource land-use classifications which are formulated to maintain areas intended for the managed production of resources as open lands. The land-use plan maps specify permitted densities and uses which are consistent with protection of the resource capabilities of the land.

**Goals OS-7:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that lands which may be needed in the future for extraction or production of resources be maintained in large parcel sizes and with a low intensity of development so as to conserve such lands for their open space as well as their future resource values.

**Objective OS-7.1:** It is the County's objective that commercial, residential and industrial uses not occur on lands which are designated for managed resources, except as such uses are ancillary to and secondary to resource-related uses -- as specified in the Land-use Element.

**Objective OS-7.2:** It is the County's objective that permitted land uses be limited to low intensities so as to protect the resource and maintain the potential for future productive use of the resource.

The County shall utilize the following policies related to managed resources:

**OS-7a:** The "Vineyards and Specialty Crops", "Grazing, Forage Crops, and Livestock", and "Diverse Agriculture" land-use categories shall be applied to agricultural lands based on existing uses, parcel sizes, and prime soils to protect their resource value.

**OS-7b:** The "Geothermal and Mineral Resources" land-use category shall be applied to those lands within the primary known geothermal resource area wherein development will not adversely affect agricultural uses located in Alexander or Knights Valleys.

**OS-7c:** The "Geothermal and Mineral Resources" land-use overlay designation shall be applied to quarry, instream, and terrace mining sites designated in the "Aggregate Resources Management Plan".

**OS-7d:** The "Natural Resource Conservation" land-use designation shall be applied to lands which are needed to maintain and protect watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat, and unique and sensitive biotic areas and landforms.

**OS-7e:** The "Timberlands" land-use category shall be applied to all land subject to Timber Preserve Zoning.

**OS-7f:** Proposals to amend the land-use plan maps from an agriculture or resource category to a residential, commercial, or industrial base category may not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:

- 1) The existing supply of lands available for such development within the sub-county planning areas is insufficient.
- 2) The site does not have a substantial natural resource value as a watershed, habitat, timber land, or agricultural land.
- 3) The use will not adversely affect adjacent agricultural or resource uses.
- 4) Adequate public services, including roads, are available.

## 5.0 OPEN SPACE POLICY FOR AREAS SUBJECT TO PHYSICAL HAZARDS

**Introduction:** Areas subject to physical limitations such as flood, fire, and seismic or geologic risks are classified as hazardous areas. Development in these areas can create a threat to public health and safety unless it is



managed and regulated. The Public Safety Element contains detailed information on the locations of hazardous areas. Floodplains, fire hazards, and seismic and other geologic hazards have been mapped, and detailed goals, objectives, and policies for the protection of the public are expressed in the Safety Element.

**Goal OS-8:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma that areas subject to flood, wildland fire, seismic or other geologic hazards be maintained as open space areas and subject to special management procedures to protect the public health and safety -- except for such areas as were already intensively developed as of 1986.

**Objective OS-8.1:** It is the County's objective that any new development which may be permitted in hazardous areas be limited to very low-intensity uses.

In addition to the applicable policies expressed in the Public Safety Element, the County shall utilize the following policies related to hazardous areas:

**OS-8a:** The land-use plan maps express permissible densities and land-uses which are appropriate to maintaining hazardous areas as open space.

**OS-8b:** Proposals to amend a land-use plan map shall be reviewed in relationship to the geologic, fire hazard, fault zone, and floodplain maps of the Public Safety Element and the land-use goals expressed in Section 2.1.7. Amendments which would permit a greater level of development on parcels located in hazardous areas shall not be approved unless they conform to the following criteria:

- 1) The proposal is consistent with Objectives LU-8.1 through LU-8.7 related to density and intensity of use.
- 2) The existing supply of lands available for development within the sub-county planning area is insufficient to accommodate projected needs through year 2005.
- 3) A focused or full EIR has been prepared which identifies suitable mitigation measures which would reduce the exposure of people or property to hazards to an acceptable level.

## 6.0 POLICY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

Preservation of open space for outdoor recreation, including parks, equestrian and hiking trails, and bicycle routes, provides aesthetic and psychological benefits for present and future residents of the county. The Public Facilities Element contains a detailed analysis of parkland needs as well as specific implementation policies for meeting these needs. Figures OS-4a and

4b are schematic representations of designated outdoor recreation areas; more precise locations for some of the areas subject to these policies are indicated on the open space plan maps for the nine sub-county regions (Figure OS-5a through 5i).

## **6.1 POLICY FOR PARKS AND EQUESTRIAN AND HIKING TRAILS**

**Issues:** As of 1986, hiking and riding trails were primarily confined to parklands within Annadel, Austin Creek, Salt Point, Jack London and Sugarloaf Ridge State Parks, Lake Sonoma and Hood Mountain County Park. Coastal access trails have also been developed within the Sea Ranch Subdivision. A trail system plan (Figure OS-4a) has been developed by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department which would link various parks and expand hiking and riding opportunities. The trail plan is not intended to be a trail users guide but is primarily a document for planning and securing lands in the future for a countywide trail system. Many property owners, especially those engaged in agriculture, have expressed concerns about trespassing and potential damage by careless hikers through the release of farm animals or unleashed dogs, and are opposed to public access across their lands. Tort liability is also a concern, although California Civil Code Section 846 provides some protection for private property owners. Funding the acquisition and maintenance of trails is also an issue, given anticipated budget constraints.

**Directive:** The general plan shall establish policies for the creation of countywide park and trail systems which will meet future recreational needs as the county's population expands and becomes more urbanized. Policies shall emphasize the long range nature of the plan, and shall be formulated so as to protect agricultural interests.

**Goal OS-9:** It is a goal of the County of Sonoma to preserve adequate open space lands and parklands for outdoor recreational use and to provide a trail system for the use of hikers, boaters, and equestrians.

**Objective OS-9.1:** It is the County's objective that adequate parklands and trails be provided in locations that are convenient to serve the outdoor recreation needs of the projected future population.

In addition to those policies expressed in the Public Facilities and Services Element, the County shall use the following policies related to open space for outdoor recreation:

**OS-9a:** The "Public-Quasi Public/Park" land-use designation shall be applied to all existing local, county, and state parklands shown on the open space map.

**OS-9b:** The "Park" overlay land-use designation shall be applied to all proposed local, county, and state parklands shown on the open space map.



# SCHEMATIC MAP OF DESIGNATED OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

## OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Open Space Element text expresses policies which are applicable to the following designated outdoor recreation areas:

- Existing Public Park
- Proposed Future Public Park
- Other Public Recreation Areas
- Proposed Waterway "Trail"
- Proposed Hiking/Equestrian Trail Along Abandoned Railroad R.O.W.
- Along Streams
- Over Access Easements
- Proposed Multiple-use Trails Along Abandoned Railroad R.O.W.
- Over Access Easements

Notes: 1) See Figures OS-5a through OS-5i for precise mapping of areas within each planning region which are subject to these policies.  
2) The Open Space Element text may express policies for additional outdoor recreation areas which are not designated on the maps.

- PLANNING AREA KEY
- 1 Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
  - 2 Cloverdale/N.E. County
  - 3 Healdsburg and Environs
  - 4 Russian River Area
  - 5 Santa Rosa and Environs
  - 6 Sebastopol and Environs
  - 7 Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
  - 8 Petaluma and Environs
  - 9 Sonoma Valley



SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
575 Administration Dr., Room 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401




Adopted by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution:
Amended by Board of Supervisors	
Date	Resolution:



# SCHEMATIC MAP OF DESIGNATED OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS PLANNED BIKEWAY ROUTES

## OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Open Space Element text expresses policies which are applicable to the following designated bikeway routes:

- Class I Bikeway 
- Class II Bikeway 
- Class III Bikeway 

### PLANNING AREA KEY

1. Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin
2. Cloverdale/N.E. County
3. Healdsburg and Environs
4. Russian River Area
5. Santa Rosa and Environs
6. Sebastopol and Environs
7. Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs
8. Petaluma and Environs
9. Sonoma Valley



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**OS-9c:** Dedication of public access by fee or easement from a public highway to the banks of navigable streams and rivers and to land below the ordinary high watermark on any coast line, and to public lakes and reservoirs shall be required as a condition of approval on all subdivisions containing such resources.

**OS-9d:** The trail designations on the conceptual Outdoor Recreation Policy Map (Figure OS-4a) represent the County's schematic plan for trails.

Locations of proposed trails are approximate and in some instances may be adjusted to follow roadways where access cannot be obtained through private property. Potential trails are classified as follows:

1. Waterway Trails: The Russian River, Gualala, Petaluma River, and a portion of Sonoma Creek are designated as waterway trails. Boating and canoeing are the primary activities to be accommodated. Hiking trails are limited to those locations where access can be obtained to connect urban areas to parks and the waterway.

2. Hiking and Equestrian Trails: Trail systems are proposed along the Sonoma County/Napa County boundary, several railroad rights-of-way and the Sonoma County Water Agency channels. In addition, existing and proposed state and county parks are linked by trails and connected to urban areas.

3. Multiple Use Trails: The Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way between Petaluma, Sebastopol, Graton, and Santa Rosa is proposed as a multiple use trail for hiking, equestrian, and biking use. South of Sebastopol, portions of this line may be difficult to obtain and existing roadways are proposed as an alternative route.

**OS-9e:** The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department shall coordinate the detailed planning of the trails system and shall be responsible for their acquisition, construction and maintenance. Priorities shall be established for the development of trails and the annual capital improvement budget shall include a summary of trails improvements.

**OS-9f:** The County shall encourage private organizations to assist in the construction and maintenance of trails.



**OS-9g:** Dedication of access easements, or an irrevocable offer of dedication of such easements, for trails may be required by the County as a condition of approval of discretionary planning permits. In general, this requirement may be imposed only after determination of the preferred alignment of particular trails by the Regional Parks Department. In areas designated for agricultural use by the land-use plan maps, trails shall not be constructed or opened to the public until the property owner has agreed or until agricultural use has ceased.

**OS-9h:** The Board of Supervisors shall establish a Trails Advisory Committee to develop implementation measures for establishing a trail system, including easement acquisition, trail development and maintenance, and trail system promotion. The committee shall include but not be limited to representatives of agricultural interests, hiking and/or riding organizations, the County Parks Department and the California State Parks System.

## 6.2 POLICY FOR BIKEWAYS

**Introduction:** Bicycles are used both for daily transportation and for recreation. At present, however, the bicycle must compete with the automobile for space on roadways and the lack of an adequate bikeways system discourages their use. Recreational bike routes are few in number and poorly separate bicyclists from automobiles. Functional classifications of bikeways include three types:

- 1) **Class I Bikeway (bike path).** A bike path is a special facility for the exclusive use of bicycles which is separated from motor vehicle facilities by space or a physical barrier. A bike path may be on a portion of a street or highway right-of-way or on a separate, special right-of-way.
- 2) **Class II Bikeway (bike lane).** This category describes a restricted right-of-way designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles. Through-travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians is not allowed, although vehicle parking is permissible. Cross-flows by motorists to gain access to driveways or parking facilities is allowed, as well as pedestrian cross-flows to gain access to parking facilities or associated land use.
- 3) **Class III Bikeway (bike route).** This facility is a shared right-of-way designated as such by signs placed on vertical posts or stenciled on the pavement. Any bikeway which shares its through traffic right-of-way with either moving (not parking) motor vehicles and/or pedestrians is considered a Class III Bikeway.

Highway 1, Highway 116, Highway 11, Highway 128, and a north/south route comprised of "D" Street, Petaluma Hill Road, Old Redwood Highway, Dry Creek Road, and Dutcher Creek have been selected by the California Department of Transportation (Cal-Trans) as bicycle touring routes in Sonoma County. As o

1986, the County of Sonoma, City of Sebastopol, and City of Santa Rosa were cooperating in pursuing funding for the acquisition of the Northwestern Pacific Right-of-Way between Santa Rosa and Graton for use as a bikeway.

**Goal OS-10:** It is a goal of Sonoma County to provide a bicycle trail system which meets both the transportation and recreational needs of residents.

**Objective OS-10.1:** It is the County's objective that bikeways connect major residential, commercial, employment, educational, cultural, and recreation areas.

**Objective OS-10.2:** It is the County's objective that the locations and types of bicycle routes be coordinated with Cal-Trans and city routes.

**Objective OS-10.3:** It is the County's objective that abandoned railroad rights-of-way, natural waterways, flood control channels, utility rights-of-way and public lands be utilized for Class I bikeways. Where portions of rights-of-way are difficult to obtain, existing roadways may provide alternative alignments.

The County shall use the following policies related to open space for bicycle routes:

**OS-10a:** The bicycle routes designated on Figure OS-4b represent the bikeways planned for unincorporated areas of Sonoma County.

**OS-10b:** The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department shall assume the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of Class I bikeways along railroad rights-of-way, flood control channels, waterways and in parks within unincorporated areas. Pathways shall be designed to protect existing residences with fencing and/or landscaping.

**OS-10c:** The Sonoma County Department of Public Works shall assume responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of Class II and Class III bikeways along roadways in unincorporated areas.

**OS-10d:** Review of public projects conducted under the authority of Section 65402 of the Government Code shall utilize the following criteria to determine open space plan consistency:

- 1) Future construction and reconstruction of arterials and collector roadways that have been designated for Class II bikeways shall include roadway space for bicycles.
- 2) Future construction and reconstruction of arterials and collector roadways that have been designated for Class III bikeways shall include paved shoulders for bicycles.



- 3) Future acquisition and development of railroad rights-of-way for transit shall be reviewed for potential multiple use as bicycle trails.

**OS-10e:** On any application for a discretionary planning permit, including subdivision or lot-line adjustment, involving lands within a railroad right-of-way where service has been abandoned the following findings shall be required in order to determine consistency with the Open Space Element:

- 1) The proposal does not or will not preclude the use of the abandoned right-of-way for a trail system.
- 2) A width of 60 feet generally shall be reserved for trail purposes, unless the Regional Parks Department determines that a greater or lesser width would be adequate.
- 3) An irrevocable offer of dedication for the path has been made to the County of Sonoma.

**OS-10f:** The County shall seek state and federal funding and grants for bikeway construction.

**OS-10g:** The County shall encourage private organizations to assist in maintaining and patrolling bikeways.

## 7.0 POLICIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCE AREAS

**Introduction:** Historic preservation is the retention of the best of the past in order to maintain reminders of the County's heritage and development. Historic building surveys have been prepared for the coastal, Sebastopol, Healdsburg, and Sonoma Valley areas to provide an inventory of the county's historic resources, some of which may be threatened by development or by a lack of maintenance. Archaeological sites also contribute a sense of the history and culture of Sonoma County's earliest residents. Areas of high probability of occurrence of archaeological sites include locations with flat to gently sloping terrain near riparian zones. Areas of moderate sensitivity include ridgetops, the bases of hills, and ecotones. Archaeological sites can be disturbed by development activities. In addition to these resources, heritage and landmark trees enhance the quality of the environment, promote aesthetic values, have historical significance and serve as reminders of our heritage for future generations.

**Goal OS-11:** It shall be a goal of the County of Sonoma to preserve significant archaeological and historical sites representing all the ethnic, cultural, and economic groups that have lived and worked in Sonoma County and to preserve heritage or landmark trees which represent historical significance or uniqueness in terms of age, rarity, or size.



**Objective OS-11.1:** It is the County's objective to encourage preservation and conservation of historic structures by promoting their rehabilitation and/or their adaptation to new uses.

**Objective OS-11.2:** It is the County's objective to encourage preservation of historic buildings through the maintenance of a Landmarks Commission which will provide for expert review of proposed projects which may affect historic structures or other cultural resources.

**Objective OS-11.3:** It is the County's objective to encourage the preservation of archaeological resources through review of all development proposals in archaeologically sensitive areas.

**Objective OS-11.4:** It is the County's objective to identify and preserve heritage and landmark trees.

The County shall utilize the following policies related to historic and cultural resources:

**OS-11a:** The County Landmarks Commission shall conduct architectural design review of proposals for new construction or remodeling of structures within designated historic districts.

**OS-11b:** Proposals for County Landmark status and rezonings to the HD (Historic District) shall be referred to the County Landmarks Commission for their recommendation.

**OS-11c:** The County Landmarks Commission shall review Historic Building Surveys and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for designation of structures as county landmarks.

**OS-11d:** Specific plans shall include a list of historic structures which are recommended for designation as county landmarks and rezoning to the HD (Historic District) zoning district. The list shall be referred to the Landmarks Commission and the Planning Commission for their recommendation prior to decision by the Board of Supervisors.

**OS-11e:** Applications for discretionary permits, including building permits, which involve the removal, destruction or alteration of a structure identified in a historic building survey shall be referred to the Sonoma County Landmarks Commission for consideration of appropriate mitigation measures. Such measures may include reuse, relocation, or photo-documentation.

- OS-11f:** Applications for discretionary planning permits shall be referred to the Northwest Information Center, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University to ascertain the probability of disturbing archaeological and historical resources. Field surveys shall be required for proposed projects which would be located on lands determined to have a high probability of occurrence of archaeological sites.
- OS-11g:** The Planning Department shall prepare for consideration by the Board of Supervisors, an amendment of the HD zoning regulations to include: 1) the protection of heritage and landmark trees and groves of trees as an additional purpose of the district, 2) criteria for designation of trees, 3) duties of the Landmarks Commission, and 4) other regulations as necessary to insure the preservation of such trees.
- OS-11h:** The Planning Department and Landmarks Commission shall pursue grant funding for the preparation and updating of historic resource inventories.
- OS-11i:** The County Landmarks Commission shall administer a preservation program for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic structures, with grant funding provided from "Bed Tax" funds.

## 8.0 PROGRAMS TO IMPLEMENT OPEN SPACE POLICY: 1987-1992

The following action program will be undertaken by the County of Sonoma to implement open space policy. Decisions separate from adoption of the general plan itself will be necessary in order to establish or implement the programs.

### Open Space Program 1: Open Space Zoning Ordinance Amendments

**Type of Program:** Zoning  
**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Timeframe:** Within 1 year of adoption of revised general plan  
**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocation  
**Policy Reference:** OS-1b, OS-2b, OS-3a, OS-4b, OS-3f, OS-3g, OS-5d

**Program Description:** Prepare for consideration by the Board of Supervisors 1) a scenic resources combining district which would establish performance standards and other appropriate regulations applicable to community separators, scenic landscape units and scenic corridors; 2) a biotic resources combining district which would require a discretionary development permit and/or establish performance standards and other appropriate regulations for vegetation removal in areas with wetlands, riparian habitats and rare and endangered species; 3) an amendment to the

sign regulations to prohibit off-site advertising signs in designated scenic corridors; 4) an amendment to regulate the placement of satellite dishes along scenic corridors; 5) revision of parking regulations to establish requirements for numbers, location, and type of bicycle parking spaces to be provided within development projects; and 6) revisions to the HD regulations to include landmark and heritage trees.

**Open Space Program 2: Subdivision Ordinance Amendment to Establish Open Space Siting Requirements**

**Type of Program:** Subdivision Regulations

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department/County Counsel

**Timeframe:** Within 2 years of adoption of revised general plan

**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in Departmental budget allocation

**Policy Reference:** OS-1d, OS-2c

**Program Description:** Prepare an ordinance amendment which would require 1) that subdivisions of lands within designated community separators or scenic landscape unit establish building envelopes which are located below ridgelines and use existing vegetation where available as screening and 2) that building setbacks for riparian areas and/or biotic resource areas be shown on tentative and final maps.

**Open Space Program 3: Request State Scenic Highway Designations for Highway 1, Highway 116 (portion) and Highway 37**

**Type of Program:** Administrative

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Timeframe:** 1988/89 fiscal year

**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocation

**Policy Reference:** OS-3k

**Program Description:** Adoption by the Board of Supervisors of a resolution requesting state action. Upon approval of the study by the state, the Board would appoint a citizens committee to work with the state. Final scenic highway report would be sent to the Board and the State for approval.

**Open Space Program 4: Establishment of an Open Space District**

**Type of Program:** Ballot Measure

**Responsible Agency:** County Counsel assisted by Planning Department, Parks Department, and County Administrator

**Timeframe:** Measure to be submitted to voters in 1988

**Budgetary Impact:** No increase in departmental budget allocations.

**Policy Reference:** OS-1h



**Program Description:** A measure would be prepared to establish an Open Space District for the purpose of acquiring and administering open space lands. The measure or a subsequent measure shall include an appropriate funding source, such as a special tax, to finance acquisition of partial or in-fee interests in lands, including purchase of development rights, in designated open space areas.

#### **Open Space Program 5: Establishment of Trails Advisory Committee**

**Type of Program:** Administrative

**Responsible Agency:** Appointment by Board of Supervisors; On-going staffing by Parks Department

**Timeframe:** Within 1 year of adoption of general plan update

**Budgetary Impact:** None

**Policy Reference:** OS-8g

**Program Description:** Appoint a Trails Advisory Committee to develop implementation policies for establishing a trail system including easement acquisition, trail development and maintenance guidelines and procedures, and trail system promotion. Committee to include but not be limited to representatives of the agricultural community, hiking and equestrian organizations, the County Parks Department and California State Parks System.

#### **Open Space Program 6: Acquisition of Lands for Trails**

**Type of Program:** Capital Improvements Program and Budget

**Responsible Agency:** Regional Parks Department

**Timeframe:** Annually

**Budgetary Impact:** Park Department budget allocation, general fund

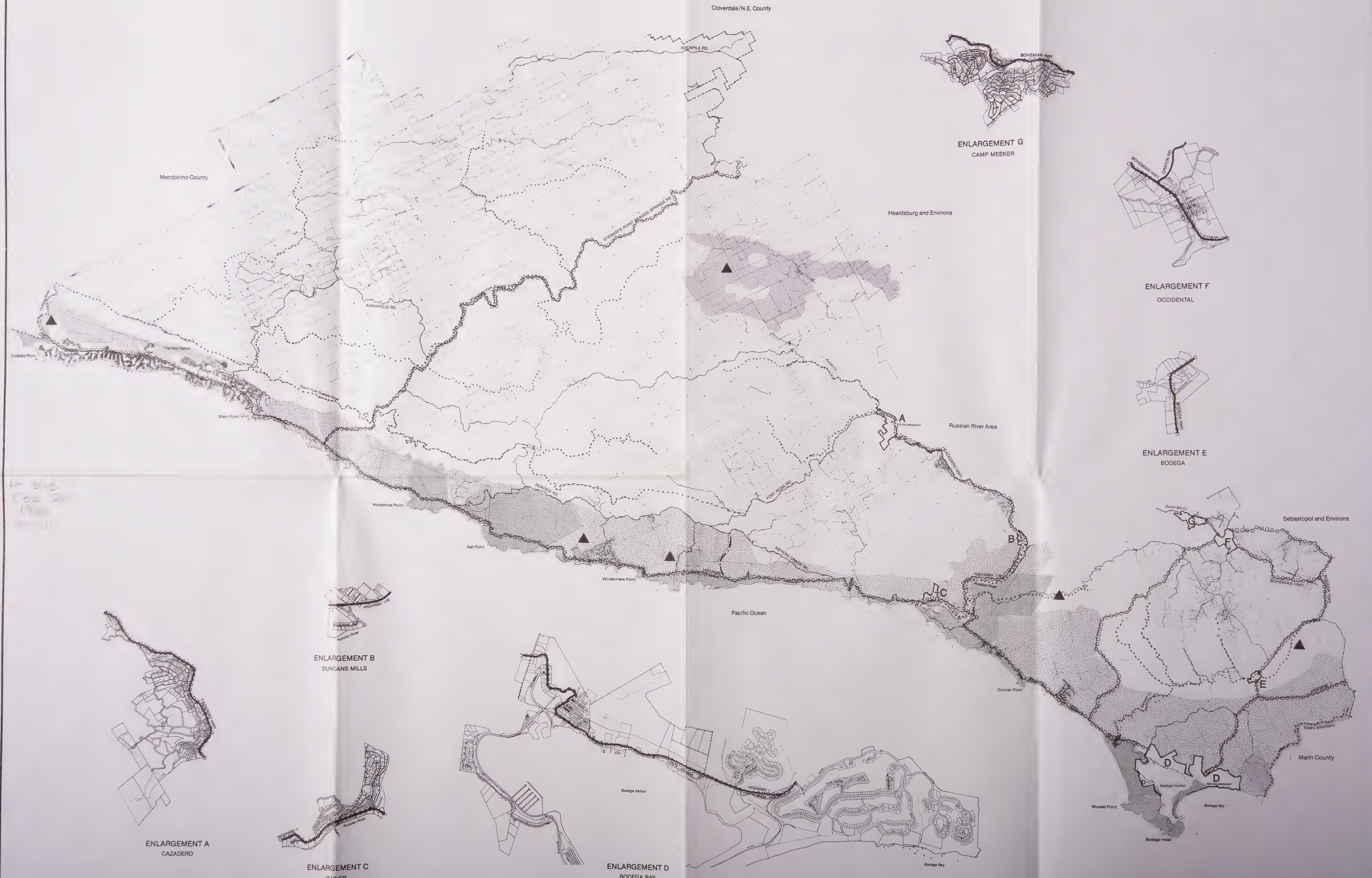
**Policy Reference:** OS-9e

**Program Description:** The Regional Parks Department shall include in its five-year capital improvement program any proposed county acquisition of lands for trails and development thereof.





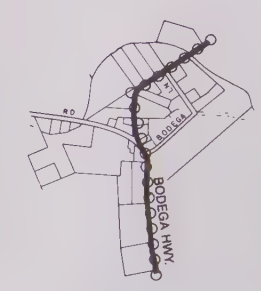




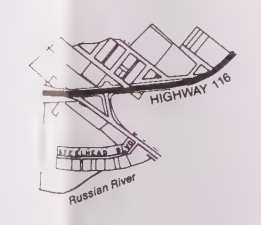
ENLARGEMENT G  
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ENLARGEMENT F  
OCCIDENTAL



ENLARGEMENT E  
BODEGA



ENLARGEMENT B  
DUNCANS MILLS



ENLARGEMENT C  
JENNER



ENLARGEMENT A  
CAZADERO



ENLARGEMENT D  
BODEGA BAY



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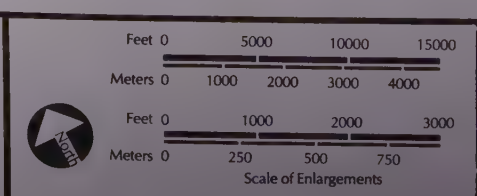
Base Map Revised December 1985

- LEGEND**
- SCENIC RESOURCES
    - Scenic Landscape Unit
    - Community Separator
    - Scenic Highway Corridor

- NATURAL RESOURCES**
- Biotic Resource Area
  - Protected Natural Riparian Corridor
  - Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

- OUTDOOR RECREATION**
- Existing Park
  - Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

Note: For planning purposes only. This does not confer the right to trespass on private property or on controlled government lands.



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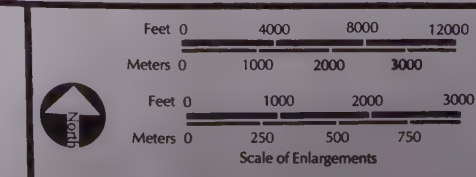
Figure OS-5b  
**Open Space Plan Map**  
**Cloverdale/N.E. County**

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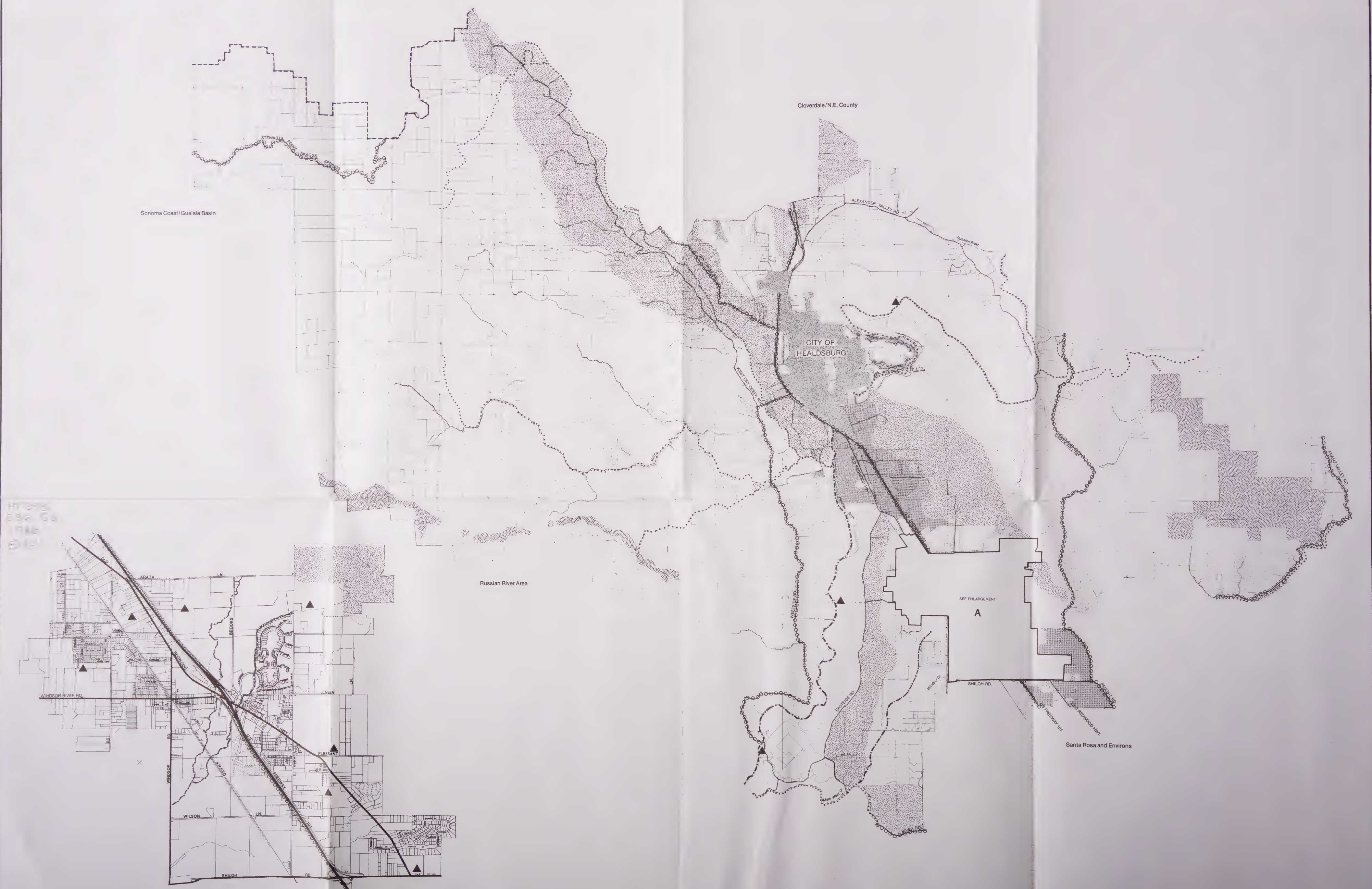
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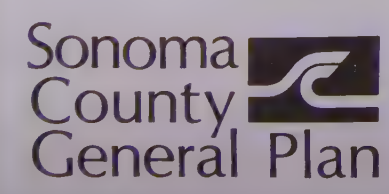




Base Map Revised December 1985

Figure OS-5c

# Open Space Plan Map Healdsburg and Environs

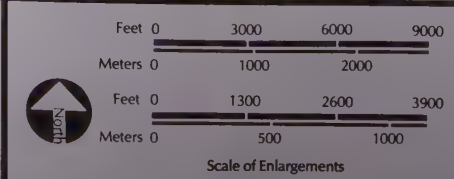


- LEGEND**
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    - Community Separator
    - Scenic Highway Corridor

- NATURAL RESOURCES**
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  - Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

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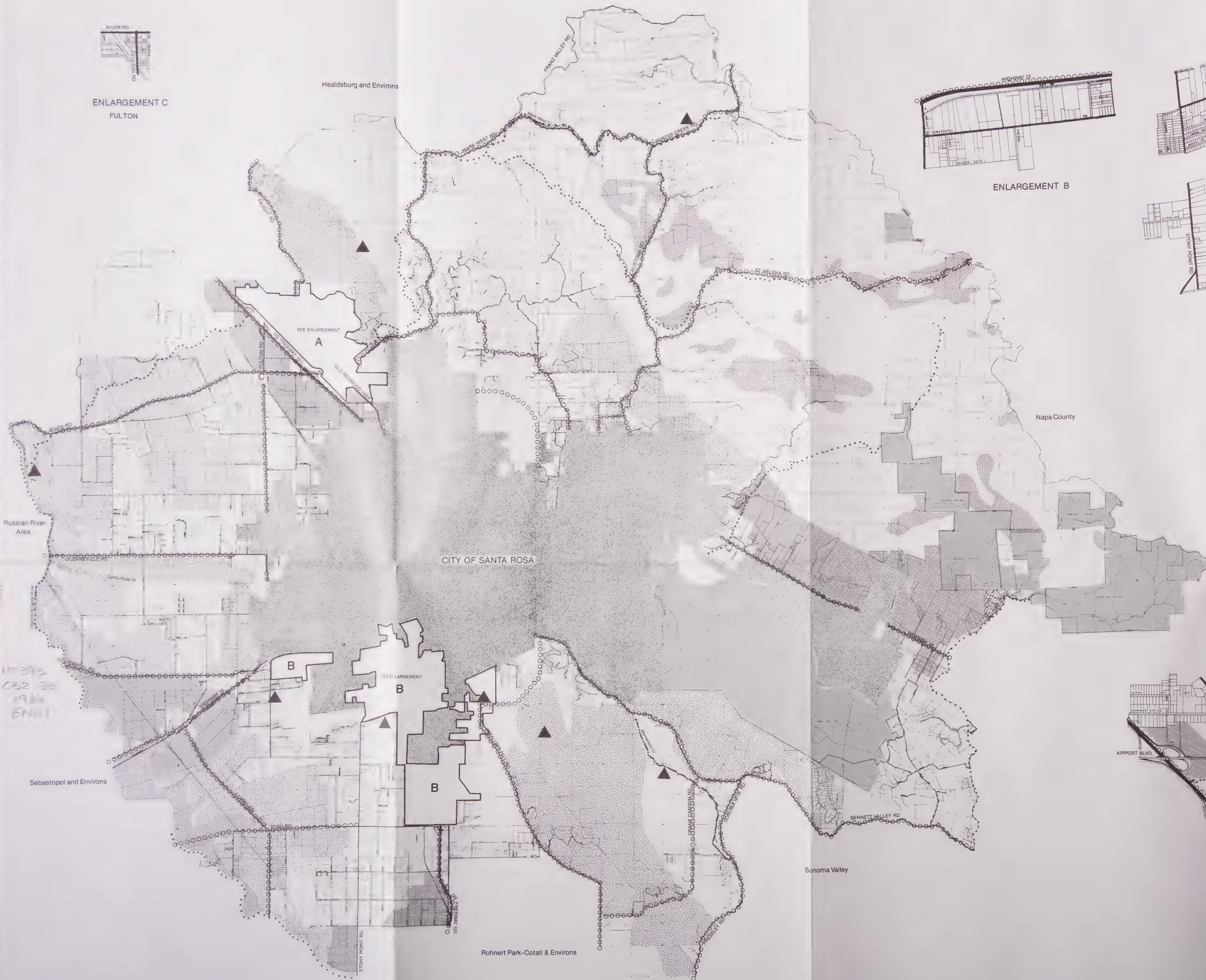




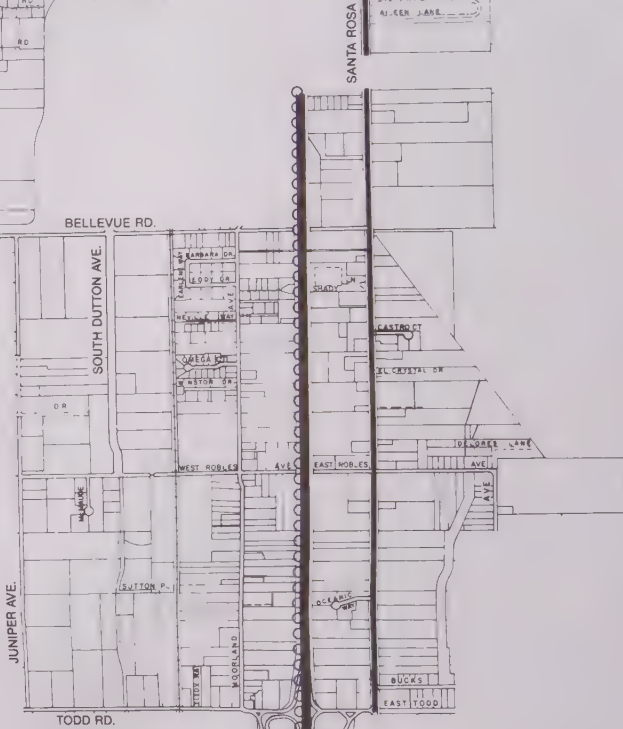




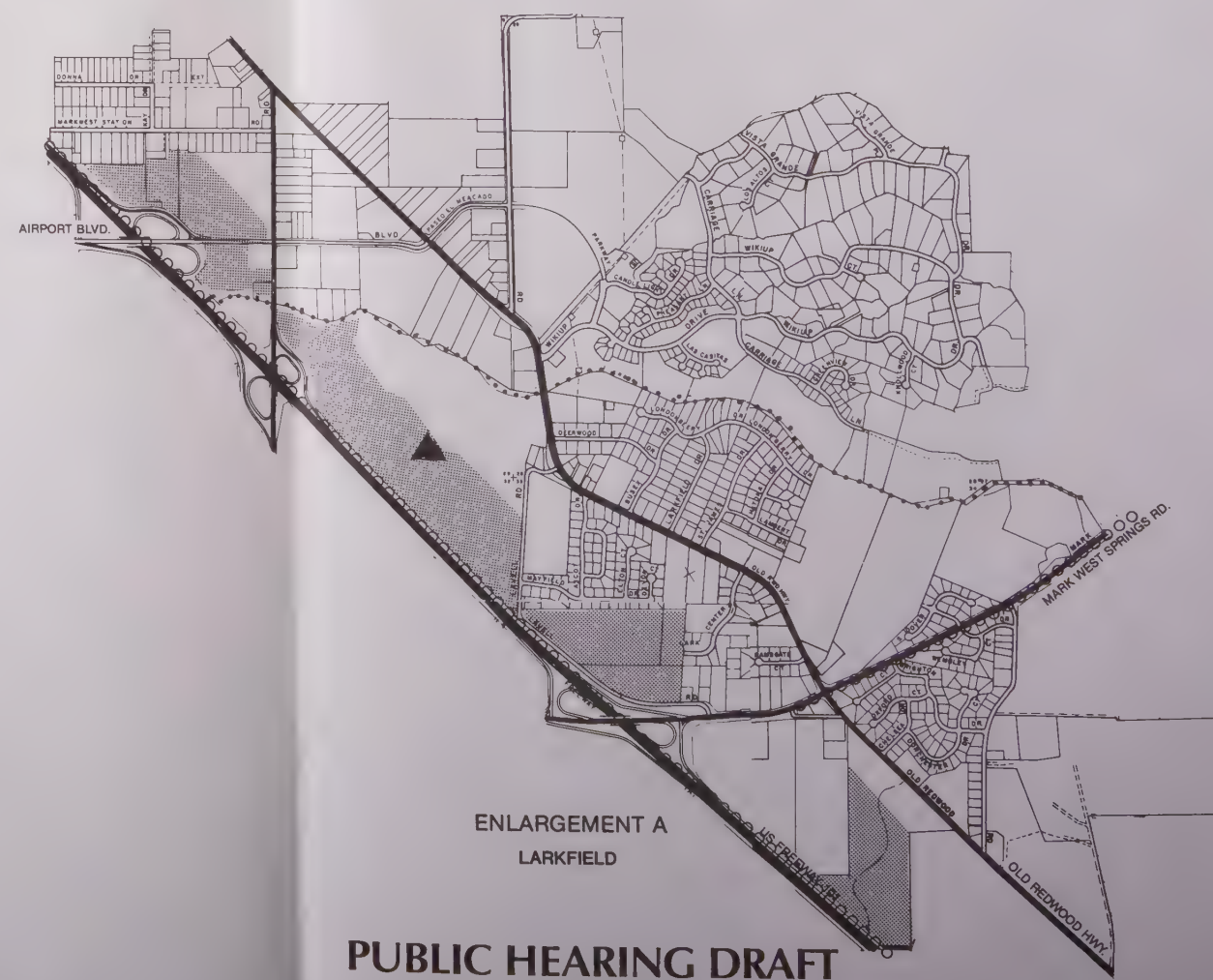
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FULTON



ENLARGEMENT B



ENLARGEMENT B  
SOUTH SANTA ROSA



ENLARGEMENT A  
LARKFIELD

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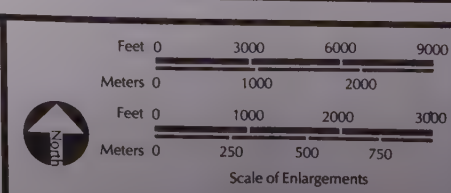
Base Map Revised December 1986

- LEGEND
- SCENIC RESOURCES
  - Scenic Landscape Unit
  - Community Separator
  - Scenic Highway Corridor

- NATURAL RESOURCES
- Biotic Resource Area
  - Protected Natural Riparian Corridor
  - Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

- OUTDOOR RECREATION
- Existing Park
  - Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

Note: For planning purposes only. This does not confer the right to trespass on private property or on controlled government lands.



Sonoma County Planning Department

Adopted by Board of Supervisors			
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Amended by Board of Supervisors			
Date:	Resolution:	Date:	Resolution:





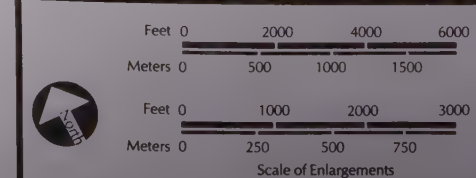
Figure OS-5f  
**Open Space Plan Map  
Sebastopol and Environs**

**LEGEND**  
**SCENIC RESOURCES**  
Scenic Landscape Unit  
Community Separator  
Scenic Highway Corridor

**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
Biotic Resource Area  
Protected Natural Riparian Corridor  
Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

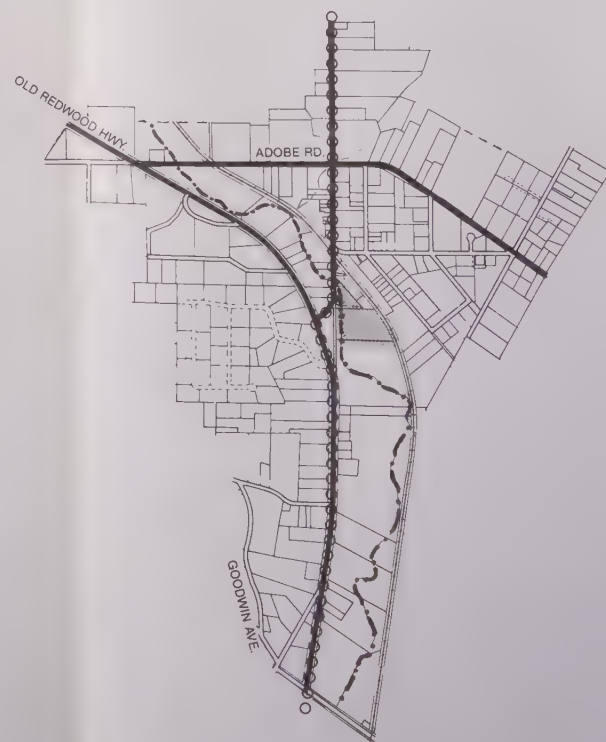
**OUTDOOR RECREATION**  
Existing Park  
Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

Note: For planning purposes only. This does not confer the right to trespass on private property or on controlled government lands.



Adopted by Board of Supervisors			
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Base Map Revised December 1985

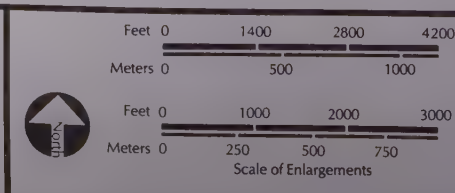
Figure OS-5g  
**Open Space Plan Map**  
**Rohnert Park - Cotati and Environs**

- LEGEND**
- SCENIC RESOURCES
    - Scenic Landscape Unit
    - Community Separator
    - Scenic Highway Corridor

- NATURAL RESOURCES**
- Biotic Resource Area
  - Protected Natural Riparian Corridor
  - Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

- OUTDOOR RECREATION**
- Existing Park
  - Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

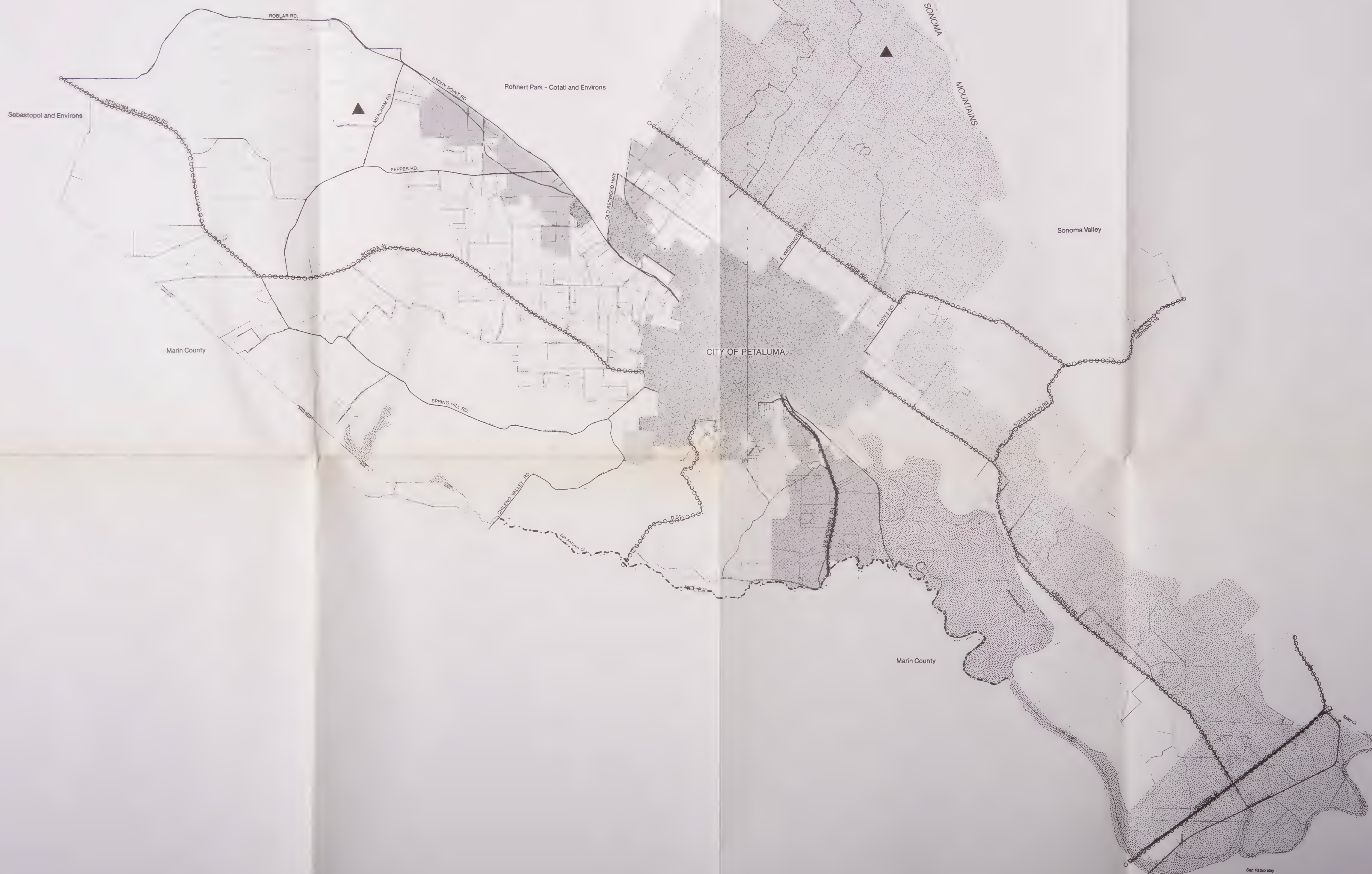
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Date:	Resolution:	Date:	Resolution:





Base Map Revised December 1985

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Figure OS-5h

# Open Space Plan Map Petaluma and Environs

Sonoma  
County  
General Plan

## LEGEND

SCENIC RESOURCES  
Scenic Landscape Unit  
Community Separator  
Scenic Highway Corridor

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Biotic Resource Area  
Protected Natural Riparian Corridor  
Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

Existing Park  
Planned Future Park (Depicts location generally where parkland is needed.)

Note: For planning purposes only. This does not confer the right to trespass on private property or on a restricted government lands.

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Adopted by Board of Supervisors

Date: Resolution:

Amended by Board of Supervisors

Date: Resolution: Date: Resolution:

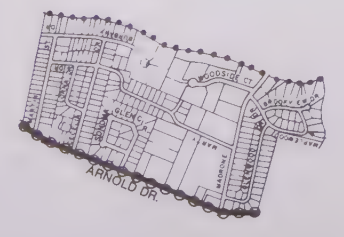
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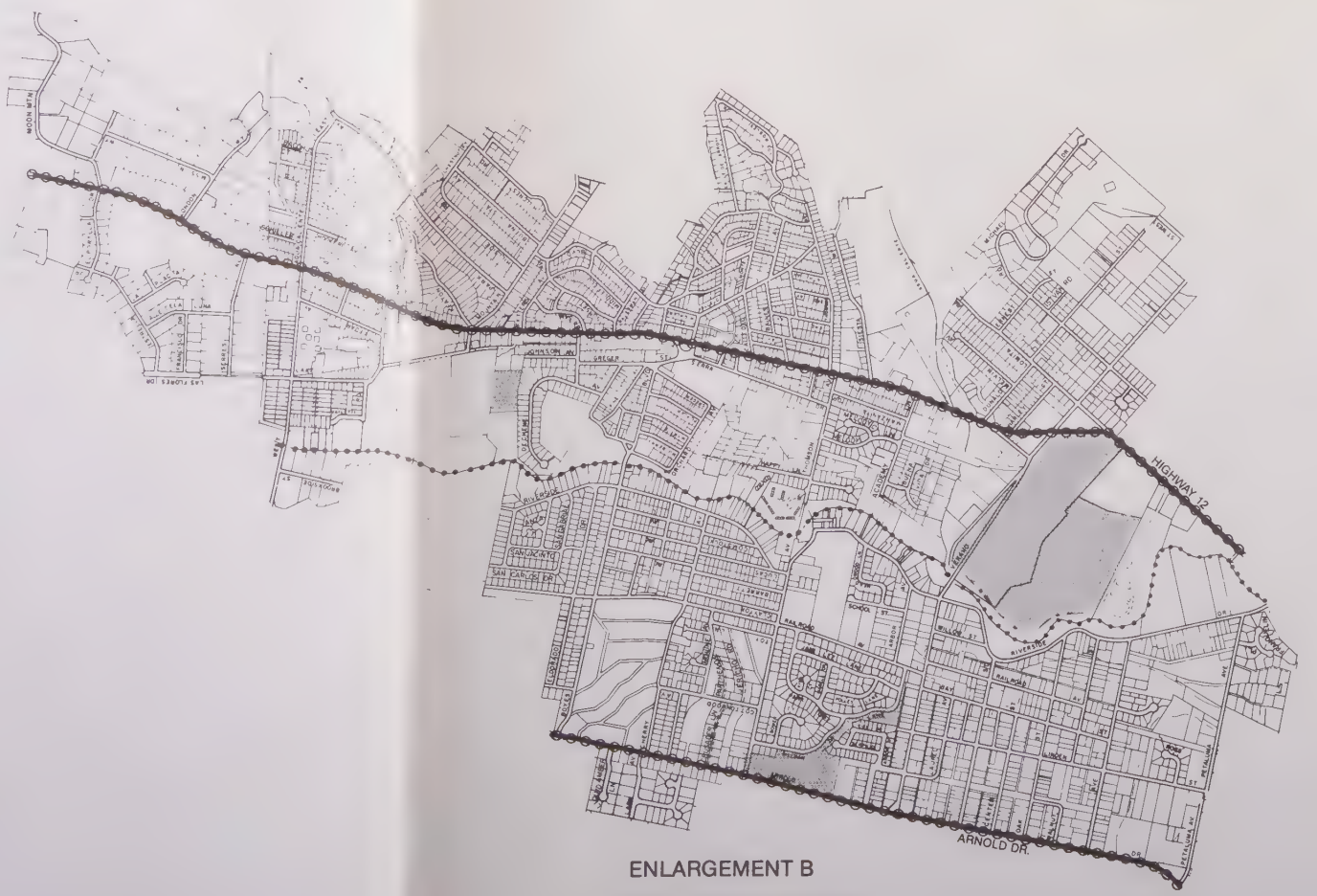
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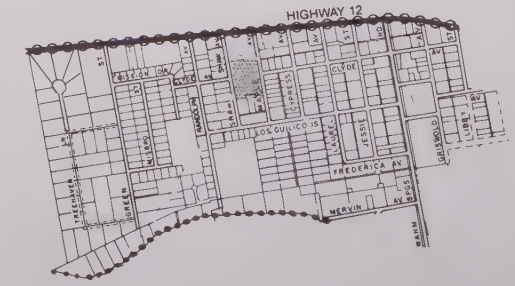
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KENWOOD



ENLARGEMENT D  
GLEN ELLEN

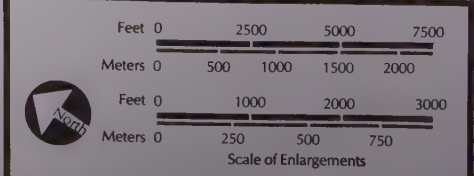
Base Map Revised December 1985

- LEGEND
- SCENIC RESOURCES
- Scenic Landscape Unit
  - Community Separator
  - Scenic Highway Corridor

- NATURAL RESOURCES
- Biotic Resource Area
  - Protected Natural Riparian Corridor
  - Modified Natural Riparian Corridor

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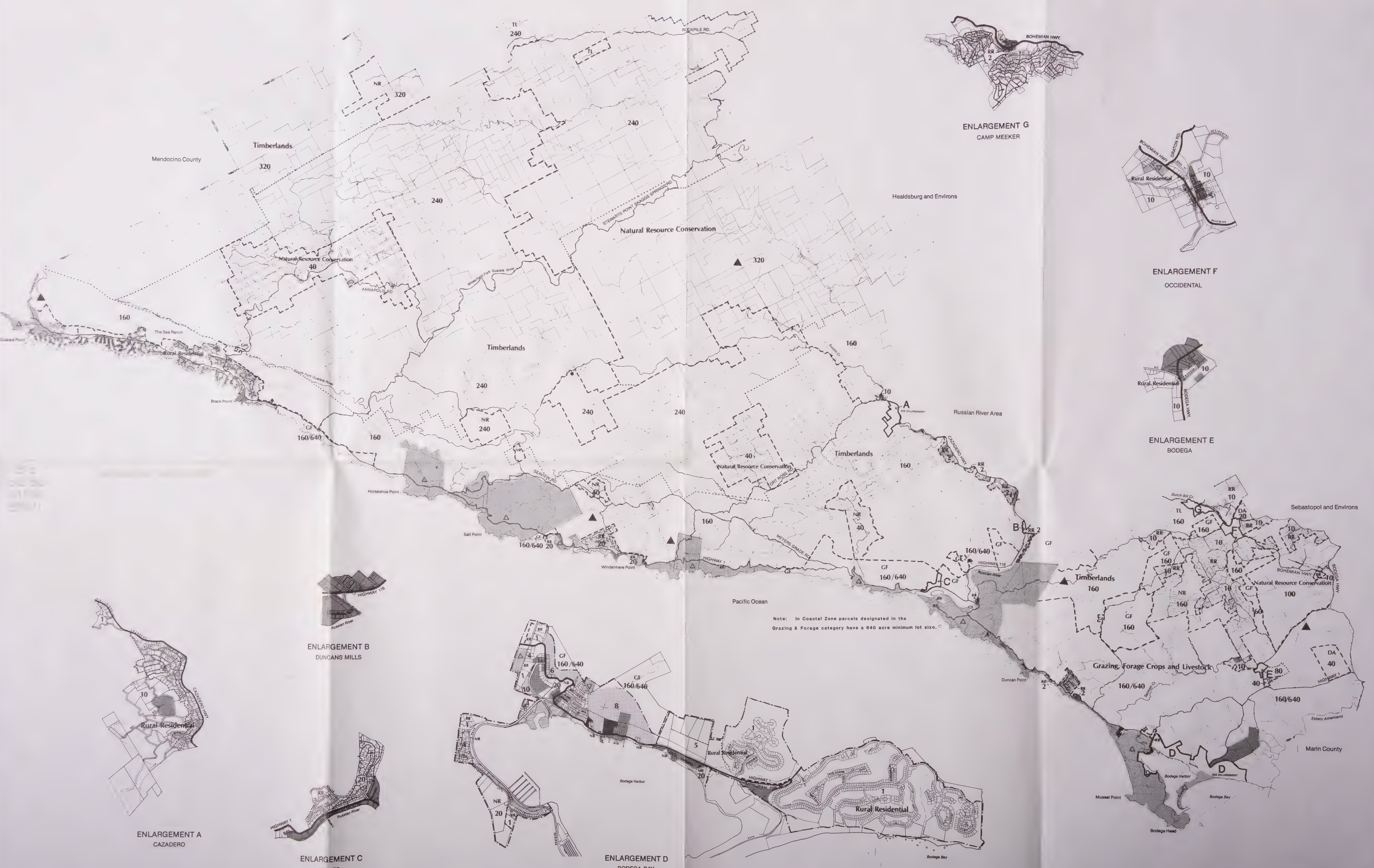
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**10-15-86**

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Amended by Board of Supervisors			
Date:	Resolution:	Date:	Resolution:





Note: In Coastal Zone parcels designated in the Grazing & Forage category have a 640 acre minimum lot size.

Base Map Revised December 1985

# Figure LU-6a Land Use Plan Map Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin

LEGEND

- URBAN RESIDENTIAL CATEGORIES
- Low Density (1)
  - Medium Density (1)
  - High Density (1)
  - RR RURAL RESIDENTIAL (2)

(1) Numbers on map indicate maximum density in units/acre  
(2) Numbers on map indicate maximum density in acres/unit

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES

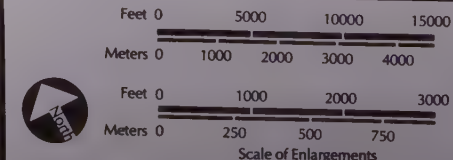
- General Commercial
- Limited Commercial
- Recreation/Visitor-Serving Comm.
- Resource-Related Commercial/Industrial
- General Industrial
- Limited Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public (see symbols below)

AGRICULTURAL CATEGORIES

- VS Vineyards and Specialty Crops (2)
  - GF Grazing, Forage Crops and Livestock (2)
  - DA Diverse Agriculture (2)
- RESOURCE CATEGORIES
- TL Timberlands (2)
  - GM Geothermal and Mineral Resources (2)
  - NR Natural Resource Conservation (2)

Proposed Existing

- Parks
- Schools
- Wastewater Mgt. Facilities
- Solid Waste Disposal Facilities
- Land Use Change
- Change in Density
- Urban Service



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Date:	Resolution:













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